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THE

CHRISTIAN'S PRIVILEGE:

OR,

A HELP TO HIS COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE PATH OF OBEDIENCE.

A PASTORAL ADDRESS,

IN THREE PARTS.

By EDWARD MANNERING,
Of Holywell Mount Chapel, Curtain Road, Shoreditch.

"If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them."
John xiii. 17.

LONDON:
SOLD BY R. BAYNES, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW;
J. DENNIS, 9, SKINNER STREET;
AND NESBITT, BERNER'S STREET, OXFORD STREET.

1831.

E. JUSTINS AND SON, PRINTERS,
BRICK LANE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

To those, generally, who, born from above, are concerned to walk worthy of their high vocation; and to the people of his pastoral care, in particular, they, having a prior and a special claim on his attention, the Author affectionately presents this small Volume, hoping that, under the divine blessing, it will promote the life and power of godliness in their souls, and thus secure that sanctification of life which glorifies the Redeemer.

Gross derelictions of christian principle are

discoverable on every hand: and as attempts at obedience sometimes indispose the believer for devotional exercises—the sufficiency of grace to sanctify him in the place, and at the time of duty, being forgotten—he, too frequently, either manifests the spirit of the world in his ordinary pursuits, or, sighing over them, excuses the sinful infirmities which blot the page of his daily history; as if it were impossible to be spiritually minded, and to serve God in the discharge of his relative and social duties.

How few carry their religion into their business! and fewer still expect habitual fellowship with God as they toil amid the cares of active life! But David and Josiah on the throne; Daniel and his three companions in Nebuchadnezzar's court; Job in providential prosperity; Nehemiah in building the walls of Jerusalem; Boaz and his reapers in the field of harvest; Joshua and Han-

nah in the family; Elisha, "the little maid" who waited on Naaman's wife, and Onesimus (subsequent to his conversion) in servitude, are all illustrations and proofs of that spirituality which may and which ought to characterize the christian in every situation. He "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him."

The positions which the Author has taken are such as the habits of these holy characters have supplied; and being solicitous, not only for the consistent but, for the *cheerful* obedience of his companions in the kingdom and patience of the Lord Jesus, he has ventured to address them on this subject. And, whatever may be the issue, he has the satisfaction to know that he has written with an eye to the glory of God, whose blessing can render the feeblest effort of his servants successful, and who will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

It is but necessary to remark, that this pastoral address was delivered to the church and congregation assembling at Holywell Mount Chapel: which circumstance will account to the reader for that familiar style the Author has adopted.

E. M.

A

PASTORAL ADDRESS,

&c. &c.

PART I.

COMMUNION WITH GOD IN THE PATH OF DUTY.

MY DEAR BRETHREN IN THE FAITH AND HOPE OF THE GOSPEL,

FROM deep convictions of the connexion subsisting between the use of means and soul prosperity, and from a holy concern for an increase of experimental and practical religion in the church, of which many of you are members, I am induced to address you on the subject of evangelical obedience, believing that, as the grace of God teacheth you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, the remarks which I have to submit to your attention will not be unacceptable,

because practical; especially as you well know that a holy walk before the Lord, is essential to communion with the Lord. This is a point of moment: for while some shun the doctrines of grace, conceiving their influence to be unholy, or rest in speculative orthodoxy, condemning as legal, and dishonouring to the Spirit, appeals to the conscience for that spiritual deportment of character in the church, in the world, and in the family, which the scriptures declare to be the evidence of regeneration; there are, even among those to whom it may be said, "we are persuaded better things of you, even things that accompany salvation," many, whose communion with God is far from being as close and as humble as the conduct predicts it to be; and others whose general habits are quite incompatible with that fellowship they profess to hold with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. To awaken attention, therefore, to the vast importance of obedience resulting from union to Christ, is desirable; and while the overwhelming responsibilities of my pastoral charge plead for your profit and spiritual progress, I must stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that, adding unto your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; you

may be neither barren nor unfruitful in your profession of the gospel.

I assure you that I write in the first place for myself, endeavouring "to point every arrow at my own heart before I level it at yours"—with shame I confess my own unfruitfulness; and feeling the necessity of running in the way of God's commandments to enjoy his presence, I am impelled to admonish *you*, sensible that, whatever may be your attainments, and however much nearer you may live to God than I do, you have not apprehended all that for which you were apprehended of Christ Jesus; and that, however wrong it may be, upon a general principle, to vest the experience of one christian with all the legal peculiarities by which another is to be tried, it is, on this occasion at least, lawful to judge of your condition and necessities by my own; and to apply to your failures the remedy which, by the Lord's mercy, has been successfully applied to my own. Let us, then, ask ourselves whether our obedience of heart and life be such as christians, with our advantages, are expected to yield; and whether we have gone to the work of faith and labour of love expecting the assistance the Lord has promised us? Let us rigidly investigate

the state of religion in our own souls, and seek the influences of the Holy Spirit, that we may live not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again.

"Many love to walk in a very careless unwise profession. So long as they can hold out in the performance of outward duties, they are very regardless of the greatest evangelical privileges; of those things which are the marrow of divine promises, all real endeavours of a vital communion with Christ. Such are spiritual peace, refreshing consolations, ineffable joys, and the blessed composure of assurance. Without some taste and experience of these things, profession is heartless, lifeless, useless; and religion itself a dead carcase, without an animating soul. The peace which some enjoy is a mere stupidity. They judge not these things to be real, which are the substance of Christ's present reward, and a renunciation whereof would deprive the church of its principal supportments and encouragements in all its sufferings. It is a great evidence of the power of unbelief, when we can satisfy ourselves without an experience in our hearts of the great things in this kind of joy, peace, consolation and assurance, that are promised in the gospel. For how

can it be supposed, that we do indeed believe the promises of things future, namely, of heaven, immortality, and glory, the faith whereof is the foundation of all religion, when we do not believe the promises of the present reward in those spiritual privileges. And how shall we be thought to believe them when we do not endeavour after an experience of the things themselves in our own souls, but are even contented without them. But herein men deceive themselves. They would very desirously have evangelical joy, peace, and assurance to countenance them in their evil frames and careless walking. And sometimes have attempted to reconcile these things unto the ruin of their souls."* Oh, that *we* may shun this dangerous rock, and manifest a holy anxiety for peace and assurance, as well by obedience to the precept, as by faith in the promise! "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart." (Psal. cxix. 1, 2.)

To enliven your zeal, to accelerate your speed in the heavenly road, and to regulate your deci-

* Dr. Owen.

sions on the nature and consequences of obedience, it is necessary to remind you of the honour God confers upon his servants, and of the communion with which he indulges them in the discharge of their duty. And should any doubts exist in your minds of the truth of these positions, they will all be removed by a careful examination of our Lord's address to his disciples : " He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father ; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 21, 23.)

From these words we learn that obedience is the fruit of love ; and that to secure a uniformly holy life, the love of God must be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Profession of love is distinct from its real existence ; for as many deny the power of godliness, who have its form, a flaming profession is often made of attachment to the Saviour and his cause, when the heart is at enmity against him. The deception and hypocrisy of such persons is sooner or later made manifest, and it happens unto them according to

the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 22.) They receive the word with apparent joy, and often, in appearance, outshine the humble and sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus: their words are many; their movements rapid; and their momentary efforts predict a long course of hard and efficient labour for the honour of truth: but, the allurements of the world inviting, or its frowns terrifying them, they turn with disgust from their religious prosecutions, and by indifference to the salvation of their own souls, or an infidel hostility to the truth, blaspheme that holy name by which they were called; and even persecute those of the Lord's people, with whom their associations were voluntarily identified.

As the apostasy, however, of the nominal professor, presents no solid argument against the reality of personal religion, no failures in his conduct, no consequences of his departure from the Lord amount to either a circumstantial or positive denial, of the existence of love in the christian's heart. Amid all the wrecks strewed on the shore around us, the vessel of mercy, under the care of the Heavenly Pilot, stems the adverse tide, out-

lives the threatening hurricane, and moves on with majestic swell, to the port of eternal peace. The christian may question his sincerity: yet a desire for Christ proves his love. With all his fear and suspicion, he cannot rest without the enjoyment of his presence, and must be with him to be happy. Is not this an evidence of love? Can man ever be reasoned into a determination to associate with his enemy? The heart that the Spirit has renewed, and without this renewal man is not a christian, must embrace with its warmest affections the Redeemer in *all* his offices: for whether the Spirit enlightens the understanding, or renews the will; dethrones idolatry in an empire, or in the heart, he designs to glorify Christ as the Saviour of sinners; and, in pursuance of this covenant purpose, discovers to the soul the beauty of his person, and the sufficiency of his atonement; which discovery is no sooner made, than he becomes precious, the altogether lovely, and the chief among ten thousand. Love is a grace that adorns the christian character, and obedience, the fruit that it bears. "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and thus love, not in word only, but in deed, and in truth. Love to the Saviour's person will cause delight in

his ways; and the eye of faith no sooner beholds his glory, than the will approves his law. It is impossible to love Christ without knowing him; and equally impossible to love him without being anxious to serve him. Love to his person as God and Man is the spring of desire to walk in his paths; and if the spring be active, the feet will move swiftly to do his pleasure, even though the road be rugged and thornful. The lash, under such excitements as faith in his person supplies, is useless; the terror of a slave is lost in the delight of the child; obedience is then rather pleasure than toil. "What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits toward us?" is the enquiry. "I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart"—the determination. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. i. 1, 3.)

The fruit that love bears varies in charac-

ter and proportion with times and circumstances; for while the believer must *always* be deeply solicitous for the honour of truth, he will manifest, when under divine influence, those dispositions and tempers for which occasions call. He serves a good master; he cannot, he would not, live to himself when, by believing, he rejoices in hope of glory, and deems it an honour to be allowed to work in the Lord's vineyard. Unworthy of his friendship, yet mindful of the mediums through which it flows, he is grateful for opportunities to testify that he is not only a child, but a servant of the King of kings. The fruits that he bears, are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" (Gal. v. 22, 23.) fruits, which the Spirit produces in his heart, and which cannot adorn his life, except he abide in Christ, the living vine. (John xv. 4.) There is, too, a time for bearing each of these fruits; and, trusting in the Lord, "he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. xvii. 8.) In the season of

prosperity, we look for humility, for gratitude, for benevolence, for poverty of spirit.—In adversity, for gratitude, for contentment, for submission.—In temptation, for prayer, for sanctity, for resistance.—In provocation and persecution, for meekness, for long-suffering, for pardon.—In affliction, for patience, for faith, for resignation.—In commercial intercourse, for prudential boldness, for decision of character, for consistency of habit.—And shall we look in vain? For fruitfulness at these seasons of trial, these tests of character, the gospel pleads. To be contented in prosperity, when the sky is cloudless, needs no effort; but to rejoice in tribulation for Christ's sake, and to believe that we have enough, and abound, even when providence blights our possessions, and dashes the cup from our trembling hand, requires the free operation of religious principle. To esteem a friend, whose services promote our comfort, is easy: to love the enemy that thrusts the dagger into our hearts, is no facile task. What merit is there in plucking a violet bathed with the dew drops of the morning; and who ever expects to be praised for admiring the opening rose bud? "And what glory is it, if,

when ye be buffetted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." (1 Pet. ii. 20.) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. v. 38—45.) My brethren, the gospel has done but little for you, if you have not followed, in some humble measure, these directions of the Son of God! This, Oh! this is the truth that touches the heart and conscience! Yet who that has received forgiveness for all his sins through the blood of the cross, dare despise these injunctions? "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than

others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 46—48.)

The character and measure of christian fruitfulness deserve your attention. "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God." (Phil. i. 8—11.) As a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor a corrupt tree good fruit, these are termed "fruits of righteousness," to distinguish them from the productions of the natural heart, which, however excellent and useful, are unacceptable to God because they flow not from faith in the truth:—"For whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;" and they deserve the appellation, because they are borne by righteous persons; they spring from a righteous principle; are regulated by a righteous rule; and directed to a righteous end. With these fruits the christian should abound; yea, be filled with them:

every branch should be fruitful; every branch should be full of fruit, and bear all kinds of fruit.

> "My heart, my hands, my ear, my tongue,
> Here's joyful work for you."

It is expected, also, that this measure of fruit will adorn a christian church in the full enjoyment of the means of grace. Responsibility answers to privilege, and devotedness should bear a fair proportion to advantages. My brethren, is this your case? "What more could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" (Isa. v. 4.) Is not this appeal applicable as well to you as to the Jewish church? The gospel has been preached to you, the sacraments have been administered, meetings for prayer and christian communion have been held, and there has been a considerable expenditure of feeling and of friendship amongst you: you have been warned, invited, exhorted, charged, and encouraged. And what fruit have you borne? Does the vine flourish, and the pomegranate bud forth? Does that remarkable prophecy of Joseph at all develope your character—"He is a fruitful bough, even a

fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." (Gen xlix. 22.) Every spiritual member is necessary and useful. The rich and poor—the old and young—the learned and illiterate—the weak and strong—the male and female—have all opportunities of shewing their love to Christ; and though their means of usefulness are unequal, some being more highly favoured in their souls, connexions, and circumstances than others, yet, if the fruitfulness of each be proportioned to individual advantages, truth will be honoured; for it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. Every hour should witness growth, and every place consistency; yes, it is your duty and privilege to bear witness for God in the sanctuary, in the family, in the closet, in the world; and by the manifest spirituality of your character to commend yourselves to every man's conscience, that, when even your enemies witness your zeal, they may take knowledge that you have been with Jesus, and confess that you are the seed which God hath blessed. "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." (1 Pet. ii. 15.) "Let your light," therefore, "so shine before

men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 16.)

And are you not anxious to obey God's commandments? that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in you, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?" It is your duty to love and obey God, and your happiness as well. You cannot be joyful in a state of alienation from God and of rebellion against him. His favour is life, and in his presence there is fulness of joy; but he will not indulge his backsliding people with the light of his countenance; for if they forsake his laws, and keep not his statutes, he will visit their sins with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. His covenant cannot fail, nor will he alter the word that is gone out of his mouth; yet he will, as faithfully, chastise you when you depart from him, as he will comfort you when oppressed. (Psalm lxxxix. 30—34.) Obedience and love, therefore, are your happiness as well as your duty; and as you dare not neglect precept, your concern for sanctification ought to be as deep and as practical as for justification. "Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word." (Psalm cxix. 5, 17.)

These were David's desires, and to obey was his ambition; for while on reflection he seems to have been convinced that the standard of his spirituality had been too low, he prays for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that his life might be more consistent and holy. "Deal bountifully with thy servant;" (Psalm cxix. 17.) favour me with a larger effusion of thy grace, "that I may live, and keep thy word." I would be holy, as thou art holy: but, becoming more familiar with the claims of thy love; comparing my obligations with my actual services, and balancing my responsibilities with my toils, I repent in dust and ashes over mercies abused, privileges neglected, duties omitted, and debts undischarged.

"Dear Lord, and shall I ever live
At this poor dying rate?
My love so faint, so cold to thee,
And thine to me so great?

Are not thy mercies sov'reign still,
And thou a faithful God?
Wilt thou not grant me warmer zeal
To run the heav'nly road?

Does not my heart thy precepts love,
And long to see thy face?
And yet how slow my spirits move,
Without enliv'ning grace?"

My dear brethren, examine the page of your

past history without tears if you can! How fruitless! how changeable has been your life since the Lord called you to himself! You have professed the name of Christ, and endeavoured to honour it; but have your efforts amounted to little more than an attempt at life? And if you examine the present state of things, must you not plead guilty to heavy charges? and confess, with Leigh Richmond, 'we are but half awake?' Are you not sometimes more anxious for comfort than for purity? for pardon than for strength, to redeem those pledges, which your profession has given to the world, of devotedness to the cause of Christ? You have, perhaps, this day been to the Lord for deliverance from trouble, for a blessing upon your commercial undertakings, for consolation in some domestic trial: but have you fled to the cross for *orders* as well as for *promises?* Have the appeals of that cross, *to your hearts*, for holy obedience, delighted you as much, and as steadily engaged your attention, as its pleas *to mercy and justice* for your exemption from condemnation, and eventual admission to glory? Have you not dwelt with rapture on the atonement when you have been insensible to its sanctifying influence? As a doctrine it has

pleased you, when its precepts have not humbled you. Living below your privileges your souls are distressed; and your habits, not according with your characters, grieve the Spirit by whom believers are sealed unto the day of redemption, and his influences are suspended—then "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, shake thyself from the dust, and loose thyself from the bands of thy neck." (Isa. lii. 1, 2.) "It is indeed high time to awake out of sleep, for now is your salvation nearer than when you believed." (Rom. xiii. 11.) O God, "give me understanding and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments too; for therein do I delight." (Psalm cxix. 34, 35.)

As obedience is the test of character, and love the incentive to obedience, it may be useful here to enquire into the means of enlivening affection. Cause and effect increase and decline together; and obedience can be neither extensive nor persevering, orderly nor even, if love be absent or inactive.

> "'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet
> In swift obedience move."

that energizes resolution, and induces a sacrifice of time, talent, and property to the Redeemer: and as we love him because he first loved us, a believing meditation on his free, unmerited, and everlasting love to you, is the means of increasing your love to him. My brethren, attend to this remedy. Lay the ice in sunshine, it must dissolve; place the cold heart before the altar, it will be warmed, and the vital current of pure esteem will freely flow. Waste not all your time nor exhaust your "little strength" by lamenting your disease, but apply to the process of cure, *a believing meditation on the love of Christ to sinners.* If there be not a turning to the Great Physician, you may reflect on your deficiencies for ever, without relief or correction. How can you be melted with divine compassion and tenderness in a freezing atmosphere! It is possible to weep away your energies, to effect your own paralysis, to sigh your souls into worse than iron bondage, and even to tighten and strengthen the cords that unbelief throws around you by efforts to dissolve them: and this must inevitably be the case if you look exclusively at yourselves. Look unto Christ, and you will be enlightened. Rise by faith, and under the blessed operations of the

Holy Ghost, into a spiritual contemplation of the person, work, and glory of Christ; and while you are musing, the fire will kindle. Look to, and live upon a Saviour's love to your souls, and your love to him will increase; obedience will be delightful; every thing under control will be sacrificed to his honour; and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant as in the days of old. "It may be," writes the great Romaine, "that thou art hindered from living by unshaken faith, because thou hast so little love to God—he ought to have all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; but it grieves thee to observe what a small part he has of them. This view is always humbling. Our love at best is not what it ought to be. It is not constant; it ebbs and flows. It is not perfect; the flesh always lusteth contrary to the spirit. It is not what God deserves as payment for love received: who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed sinner? On earth it surpasseth knowledge: in heaven it surpasseth all returns of praise. The highest love of glorified saints is only acknowledgment, not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore willing that God should have all the glory of their salvation. To him they ascribe it.

The same mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it something like their's. When thou art considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his, when thine is little. Believing views of his will increase thine. Thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee. This is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the divine properties of his: these rightly understood, will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation, thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love; the sense of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee: while thou art musing, the fire will kindle: it will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father."

Before we consider the honour God confers upon his obedient people, two things must be premised. First, there is nothing meritorious in their

obedience; and, secondly, that to notice it, is an act of condescension in the divine mind. Angels with all their purity of character and plenitude of service cannot merit the favour they enjoy, nor hold their inheritance of bliss by the feeble tenure their exertions might supply. They are indebted to the Divine Being for their will and power to serve him; and every act of homage paid to Deity increases their debt of gratitude to the boundless source of all their enjoyments. They are laid under solemn obligations to love and serve God; and being dependent on him for all their capabilities for service, so far from their devotedness being meritorious, their obligations to love are increased by the services they render. "His angels he chargeth with folly, and the heavens are not pure in his sight." And as for man's services, poor and few, being meritorious, we spurn the thought with indignation, as the highest insult that can be offered to God. What are his labours worth? the holiest are impure; the noblest imperfect. If he would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned; for when he has done all that is commanded him, (and where is the man that has done half?) he is an unprofitable servant, and

has done but his duty. The favour of God must be enjoyed without recompence, and the blessings of salvation received without purchase: and if man will not receive them upon God's terms, he must lament his destitution amid the terrors of despair. His pride must be humbled before he can walk with God in communion, and his depravity subdued ere he can enjoy settled peace. He must come to the cross as a beggar for salvation, receive it as heaven's best boon, and live as a sinner deserving hell, as well for his good works after conversion, as for his bad works before it, yet raised to a sweet hope of deliverance from every curse, by the unmerited favour of a covenant God. Let him bring what he may to procure mercy, and he will be denounced, by justice, as deserving to suffer the severest judgments that can fall on Adam's apostate race. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

Nor can the believer, in the possession of life, any more than the sinner seeking it, merit the favour of God. If he sacrifice his time, talent, property, health, friends, or even life itself, at the shrine of self-renunciation, far from him be the thought of merit! If he dwell in peace and contentment at home, aiding the extension of the

Redeemer's kingdom; or if he break the tenderest of human ties; cross seas and continents to publish the Saviour's fame; toil in the land of perpetual snow, or at the torrid Zone, for the conversion of sinners to Christ; and perish at last through want; at the bar of the Eternal he must plead, for his acceptance, the meritorious life and death of the God-man, and enter the New Jerusalem, not with the fadeless laurel of his own exertions on his brow, but, with his robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Again; to notice and to accept the obedience of the righteous, is an act of divine condescension so infinite, that we are lost in wonder as well when told, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, and labour of love," as when summoned by cherubim to the plain of Bethlehem, to witness the advent of the Son of God. "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high; who humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in heaven, and in the earth." (Psalm cxiii. 5, 6.) Marvellous expression! to notice the angels that surround the throne, to receive the homage of their hearts, and the adoration of their tongues, requires, on the part of Deity, a stoop, at which angels themselves

must be amazed. How much more then ought *we* to wonder at the honour God confers upon us his sinful creatures, by allowing us to engage in his service; and by assuring us that even "a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward." How humiliating is this thought to us who, being "made free from sin, and become servants of God, have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life!" How completely are all human glories eclipsed! how mean is man! how worthless his works! Yet wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! that his services, arising from love to Jesus, and directed to his glory, are vested with an honour, angels are unworthy to share!

These are our Lord's words: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him;" he shall live in our esteem, and know that we love him. The love by which all his energies of soul and body are directed to our glory shall, after an expenditure of its best resources in our service, return to his own soul with double interest: he shall enjoy our love, live upon it, triumph in it,

and be made and kept happy by it. Though his way be dark and rugged, for in obeying our directions he must suffer, he shall be more than repaid by those sweet assurances we will give him of his interest in our unchanging love. When the world frowns, we will smile; when gloomy providences threaten his ruin, we will raise his hope of deliverance, and confirm his faith in our protecting care. He shall know, by the gracious teachings of the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in him as the witness and comforter, that, it is his privilege to walk with us in the closest communion faith can realize and uphold. He shall prove that our yoke is easy, and our burden light; that in keeping our commandments there is great reward; and that our "service is perfect freedom." We will come unto him to direct, to bless, to encourage him in his work; to give him peace always by all means; and he shall never have cause to repent of "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." We will rest in our love to him, and cause him to rest here too; in the field of labour the waters of consolation shall flow, and a paradise of bliss shall rise before him to satisfy

his most enlarged expectations. We will come unto him and make our abode with him: our visits shall not be transient; and as his sufferings abound, his consolations shall abound also. Whoever leaves him, we will not; he left all for our sakes, and the gospel's, and we will become his great reward, his never-failing portion. He shall live upon the fulness provided in the covenant of redemption for sinful men, and shall want no good thing in our service. In the days of famine he shall be satisfied, and his inheritance shall be for ever. He shall be happier in the work to which we have called him, though life be sacrificed to our claims, than he possibly could have been in the world surrounded with all the luxuries, and adorned with all the honours mortality can lavish on her deluded votaries. Yes, we *have* blessed him in the path of obedience, and we will bless him there; for I will manifest myself to him: I will favour him with such blessed views of my worth and suitableness to meet his exigencies, that he shall rejoice in tribulation, and deem it an honour to be thought worthy to suffer shame for my sake. I will be better to him than his fears, than his hopes. I will keep him humble, and thus make and keep

him happy. He shall have such low views of himself, such exalted conceptions of my person and character, that he shall be constrained to glory in me alone. I will bless him, not for his doing, but in it; and when he has done my work on earth, I will admit him to my presence in glory, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Such honour, my brethren, does the Lord confer upon his obedient people; and such will be your's as you run the way of his commandments with enlarged hearts. Hitherto, perhaps, you have been dark and lifeless in duty; and are ready to enquire what marvellous tidings are these? Yet, be assured that, if I have brought strange things to your ears, you have not obeyed Christ's commandments at all, or there is something wrong in the motive or design of your obedience. You will not, surely, doubt the truth of our Lord's words, nor limit their application to the apostolic age; for he says, "If *any* man keep my word, I will manifest myself unto him;" nor must you nourish either your unbelief, or your inattention, by supposing that such enjoyments as I have alluded to are more in number, and richer in kind, than you can ever expect to realize.

None but the disobedient will deny that God does hold fellowship with his people in duty. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways;" and while duty is relieved of its terror by communion with God, it affords the strongest incentives to diligence that can ever move the human heart. But, probably, you have never expected to hold this fellowship with your heavenly Father in duty, therefore have never sought it; and if now and then he has indulged you with the consolations of his gospel, you have considered there has, on his part, been such a departure from the ordinary process of operation, as may never again occur. You have not blended into one beautiful whole the distinctive peculiarities of servant and child, and have prescribed to Deity, without being conscious of it, the place and time of refreshing from his presence. On the sabbath day, in the sanctuary, at the Lord's table, in the closet, at the family altar, in conversing with christian friends, in meetings held specially for prayer, you have expected audience with the King of kings, and he has frequently blessed you on those hallowed and consecrating occasions; but you have never, or but seldom, expected to meet him at the

counter, at the mart, in the street; and your duty, in consequence, has been drudgery, not delight. Need you wonder, then, at your own slothfulness in the path of obedience? How can things be otherwise than dark and distressing, when there is such perversion of feeling, and confusion of understanding? How can a believer be happy in the prospect of duty, without some cheering expectation of meeting his Lord on the road? And while you are contented without spiritual enjoyments in doing the divine will, the yoke must prove heavy. Study the experience of the man after God's own heart. This is his own testimony. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: (not making it miserable)—the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." (Psal. xix. 8, 11.) Thus David's heart was made glad by precept, and in the path of obedience he spent some of his

happiest moments: the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoiced with him; and his lute was never toned to sweeter numbers than when he watched his father's flock. "Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage." Nor does this state of mind surprize us; for when the Lord Jesus manifests himself to the believer's heart, and the Spirit enables him to cry, Abba, Father, every day is a sabbath, every meal a sacramental feast, every affliction an ordinance, every place a Bethel, every trial a mercy, and every hour a link in that golden chain of divine love by which he is drawn nearer and nearer to the Lord. Oh! it is impossible to tell what the soul enjoys when Christ smiles! it is indeed, to use the language of Bishop Hopkins, in "an agony of joy;" it labours to express its love to the Redeemer, and amid the noise and hurry of commercial enterprizes, enjoys a peace which passeth all understanding. "When he giveth quietness, who then can give trouble? He maketh the storm a calm, the waves thereof are still." The cross of Christ is found in the path of obedience, and its glories consecrate even the common occupations of life into spiritual exer-

cises, and the place of toil into "the anti-chamber of heaven, and the suburbs of the New Jerusalem."

The fellowship the christian enjoys with his God at these times is of the most familiar kind: and duty, when rightly discharged, promotes it. "With faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him; God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the sense of these distinguishing favours. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honour is this! Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with him. What a happiness is this! Son, all "that I have is thine; it is freely given to thee in Jesus, and thou art now called to enjoy me and mine in thy holy walk." Here duty becomes a privilege. It is exalted and spiritualized into a gospel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleasing bonds of gratitude tie his heart to obedience, to a free, holy, evangelical obedience. He obeys not as a slave, but as a son:—not for fear, but because Christ has set him at liberty:—not that God may accept, pardon, and justify him, but because God has done all for him, and

will do all in him :—not that he may have heaven for his obedience, but because heaven is reserved for him, and he for it. He therefore looks at duty as greatly refined by the gospel. Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit, every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience. He has communion with God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raised to a divine honour: for it is hereby made to them who are in Christ, the highest privilege they can have on this side of heaven."*

In every form of well-adjusted government, the scale of administration, whether limited or extensive, must be balanced by some acknowledged and efficient laws; and as Christ is the legislative, as well as the influential Head of his church, his precepts are not arbitrary enactments, nor merciless exactions on our time and attention, but household statutes, the necessity and utility of which none, but aliens, will deny. Nothing is prohibited that we may safely touch, nor enjoined that we may disregard; he studied our

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* Romaine.

best interests in legislating, and our profit is as much concerned in obedience as his glory. Some good people have conceived, that blessings are to be found only in the way of privilege, not of duty; and acting upon an unwise and unscriptural impression, have studied the first parts of the epistles, and turned with indifference from the latter. Of what perversions are not such persons guilty! and how can they expect to profit! God's blessings are profusely scattered all over the field of revelation, and we shall find, if we seek, them among the practical injunctions of the apostolic writings. Besides, we are not at liberty to reject precepts, seeing they are a part of that word we acknowledge to be precious, and believe to be inspired; they stand forth on the page of revelation with prominency, to excite our reverence; and the apostles were as much under divine influence when they enjoined them, as when they discoursed on the everlasting love of God, and on the sufficiency and perfection of the Saviour's atonement. They were not allowed to state doctrine without precept, and were as anxious to regulate the conduct, as to influence the heart, well knowing that exhortatory addresses formed a part of that vast machinery of

moral operation which is designed, not only to convert the sinner from the error of his way, but to mould him into the image of the Redeemer. God is our teacher, and without speculating on his process, or despising his measures, it is our mercy to know, and our duty to reduce our knowledge to practice, that he teacheth us to profit, and leadeth us in the way which we should go. With man, errors abound; but in God's arrangements and executions none appear. "A God of truth, without iniquity, just and right is he."

Then, as in studying the preceptive page, we discover, not only the wisdom and authority, but the mercy and love of God, we may and ought equally to meditate on his loving-kindness, when consoled and supported, and when admonished and reproved. The precepts are fruits of his love, and but for these directions in the family, in the closet, in the world, and in the church, we should be without one class of evidences to its wisdom; and a recognition of God's love as a wise love, is essential to our peace and happiness. He is jealous of our hearts and affections; and knowing that we are prone to wander from the fountain of living waters, and

that such a departure would dishonour his holy name, and entail guilt upon our consciences, he has mercifully, and from pure affection, given directions for our walk and conversation. We are in ourselves too depraved and too foolish to choose the safe path; and Satan and the world offer a thousand allurements to induce a secret or a visible departure from the truth. Is it not, then, kind of God to order our steps by his word, and to constitute it a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path? Were we thrown into life, with all our responsibilities of name and character, without the guidance of his holy word, he only knows where we should wander, and into what mazes of error and confusion we should be driven. Our deviations, with all the information and counsel the holy scriptures supply, are too numerous and aggravated: what then would be our failures without them? Oh let us study the precepts as expressions of our Father's love, and rejoice in them as those who find great spoil!

"Such is thy glorious word, O God!
'Tis for our light and guidance given;
It sheds a lustre all abroad,
And points the path to bliss and heaven.

It fills the soul with sweet delight,
And quickens its inactive powers;
It sets our wandering footsteps right,
Displays thy love, and kindles our's."

That communion is held with God in the path of obedience is, further, evident from that dependence on divine grace which the promises cherish. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." But for the power supplied by a vital union to Christ, temptation even to indolence cannot be resisted. When mysterious providences concur to weaken our confidence in the creature, and to blast our schemes of earthly joy, we shall forget our holy calling; and, by either rebellion or discontentment, render the existence of our spirituality doubtful, without the assistance of the Holy Ghost. It is as much our duty to depend upon the Lord for strength to obey, as it is to do whatever he commands us. We are not expected to labour in our own strength; we are encouraged, yea, commanded to seek supplies from the fulness of Jesus; and unless we daily receive from his fulness, and grace for grace, we shall not be able to bear the fruit we are expected to yield. For, as the Lord, to prove the existence of his fear and love in our hearts, throws us into

a furnace that threatens to consume both; not knowing, or forgetting, the process of the Holy Spirit's operations, we predict our ruin from those very circumstances which are to make the Lord's care over us manifest; and to convince the gainsayer that grace is sufficient to induce us to love our enemies, to bless our persecutors, and to rejoice in those dispensations which call for the discharge of the heaviest of our duties. Our help being laid upon one that is mighty, by one precept we are conducted to the field of labour; by another, to our Master for direction; and by a third, to the source of energy and strength. Precepts, therefore, as well as promises, lead us to Christ, and are, when understood, the means of our communion with the Father in him: but because the tone of the former, does not always, in our ear, harmonize with the latter, we are tempted to think that the one leads us *to* the cross, and the other *from* it; whereas, both concur to point our way to Jesus, and urge our flight to him for all we need. The way of life is but one, yet the people of God do not all travel precisely the same road; there is but one way to heaven, there are more ways than one to the cross; and the Holy Ghost employs a variety of means to drive or

draw the outcasts home. A doctrine, an invitation, a reproof, a promise, an injunction, are all helps to faith when the soul follows hard after God, and walks humbly with him; and as we have reason to be thankful for sanctified trials, we ought to receive with gratitude the precepts that constrain us to depend upon the Saviour's all-sufficiency. We cannot visit the throne of grace too frequently; nor do we ever go in faith, whatever may be the occasion of our supplications, without receiving a blessing. How frequently has he assisted us far beyond our expectations; and in times of trial enabled us to evince his spirit when, even, we had not faith enough to believe we should be strengthened for our conflict! Yes, by his help we have persevered (though with many infirmities and much trembling) in the path of obedience unto this day. We are humbled upon a review of our own short comings and misdoings; and humbled still more by a recollection of the assistance the Lord has afforded us. Astonished at our ingratitude and rebellion, we are amazed at his forbearance, and at that continued assistance he imparts for our daily warfare; "though we believe not, he abideth faithful; he knoweth our frame, he remembereth

that we are dust." Had we been left to ourselves, we should always have yielded to the power of indwelling sin, rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing; but his grace has been sufficient for us. All that has been wrong on our part is our own; all that has been right is his. To him, therefore, be all the glory. "O come, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." We cannot but return unto him with gratitude for enabling us to obey any of his precepts. We *are* thankful: he has disposed our hearts to praise him; and praising him, as thankfulness is the element of happiness, we are, in that proportion, happy. We cannot be joyful in duty without gratitude for strength; and the echos of the song we raise to his glory "for imparted favours," awaken in our own souls spiritual delight. In blessing him we are blessed; and the gift, occasioning gratitude, promotes our communion with the giver. And in this way is fellowship with God maintained in duty. Precepts are given — they arise out of divine love—we study the love of God in them —we depend upon Christ for strength to obey them—we are thankful for his assistance—and are rendered happy in his salvation by the

precept it enjoins. Oh the mercy of our God! how infinite, how boundless!

"Awake, my soul, in heav'nly lays,
And sing thy great Redeemer's praise;
He justly claims a song from thee:
His loving-kindness, Oh how free!"

Can love like this ever be repaid, or its wonders told? It calls us to duty, strengthens us for it, and enables us in it to hold fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: surely with such assistances, motives and results, obedience must be pleasure!

"To see the law by Christ fulfill'd,
And hear his pard'ning voice;
Changes the slave into a child,
And duty into choice."

Who would not work for such a Master!

My dear friends, let me now reason with you on the subject before us, to excite, (if possible) a more diligent and conscientious discharge of your spiritual, social, and relative duties. I think it must, by the evidences adduced, have appeared to you that, while irrespective of promises, every responsible human being is bound to obey the divine command, the believer is privileged to hold communion with God as well in obeying the precepts, as in believing the promises. What, then, should hinder your fellowship with God in bear-

ing the fruits of righteousness? Why confine your conceptions of true happiness exclusively to those moments when, amid the retirements of the closet, and subsequent to the fatigues of the day, the Holy Spirit grants you "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;" as if you were children in the eye of promise, but slaves in the calculation of precept? I am *deeply concerned* for your happiness and triumph in duty; and without detracting, by undue comparisons, from the sanctity of the sabbath, and the felicity of the sanctuary, I would press one question upon your consciences: instead of murmuring at the Disposer of events for the positions you occupy on the theatre of life, are you *happy* in the path of obedience? The bonds of moral obligation cannot be destroyed, nor must you pass by a single precept, till its claims have been practically acknowledged. You would not relinquish your hold of *pardoning* mercy for a world; you must not disregard the appeals of *legislative* mercy, for all that life holds sacred. Christ must be obeyed as well as trusted; and the reverence due to his priestly office, will induce homage to his kingly authority. Grace holds out the sceptre of pardon to encourage your

approach to the Mercy seat; and, from thence, issues her mandates to regulate your life. There is, surely, no reason why the Saviour's yoke should be heavy; but, a thousand reasons why it should be light: and if it be borne in his strength, to his glory, and his presence be sought and expected on the road, you will find it *light* and *easy indeed*. Be not terrified at its appearance, nor reason upon the consequences of its imposition; but take it up in faith, and bear it where the Lord directs you: it is the Redeemer's yoke, and when used, its worth and utility will be known. Remember, also, that by virtue of direction on the one hand, and by the grace that has abounded to you on the other, duty becomes a privilege, and privilege a duty. Would you alter the divine procedure, or have fewer enactments in your code? Would you suffer the statute book to lie year after year unopened? or study its records only to furnish a cold calculating judgment with uninfluential information, while your daily avocations form a striking contrast to the transcript you are bound to make, not with a school-boy's pencil on the canvass, but, by the practical developments of character on the world's vast tabulet? The Lord requires truth in the inward parts, and in the hid-

den part he will make you to understand wisdom: and while his sacrifices are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" "Let us make it our business and our work to bring our hearts unto it all our days. My business is not, whether I be rich or poor, wise or unwise, learned, or ignorant, whether I shall live, or die, whether there shall be war or peace with the nation, whether my house shall flourish or wither, whether my gifts be many or few, great or small, whether I have good repute or bad repute in the world; but only, whether I walk humbly with God or not. I have tired myself about many things, this one is necessary: what doth the Lord my God require of me but this? what doth Christ call for but this? what doth the whole sanctification work of the Holy Ghost tend to, but that I may walk humbly with God?" "In humble walking with God, we shall find peace in every condition. "Learn of me, I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest to your souls." Let war come on the nation, let a consumption come on my estate, let nearest relations be taken away, I

shall have peace. The soul that sets up its rest, and makes it its great concernment to walk humbly with God, is brought to his feet, bent to his will, is ready for his disposal; and whatever God does in the world with himself, his, or others, he hath peace and quietness in it; his own will is gone, the will of God is his choice."* "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision nothing, but the keeping the commandments of God." "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love

* Dr. Owen.

worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

The social and relative, as well as the personal and more spiritual duties demand attention. "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The station, whether humble or exalted, in which providence has placed you, must be occupied in the fear of the Lord; and you are as much bound to be diligent in your domestic and

commercial pursuits, as you are to rejoice in hope, to be patient in tribulation, and to continue instant in prayer. The servant, however spiritually minded, and anxious to hear, in the sanctuary, what God the Lord will say to her soul, must not *neglect* her household engagements to attend the means of grace. She is where the Lord placed her; and as her obligations to servitude are equal to those of her mistress to repay, she is obliged to devote herself to the responsibilities of her calling, believing that God will bless her in her work, and lead her to the fountain, when streams cease to flow. Parents, too, are very frequently bound to sacrifice their sanctuary enjoyments for the temporal benefit and spiritual advantage of their children; though I fear that many excellent and devoted heads of families neglect their duties at home for the high and spiritual advantages of public worship. I would not, I dare not, check a lawful desire, however fervid and aspiring, for the means of grace, but would rather fan it to a more vigorous flame; for already many of the Lord's people are too lax in their determinations to worship him in the sanctuary, and suffer a thousand trifling occurrences to detain them from the temple, sometimes on the sabbath, and more

frequently at weekly services; so that the pew is vacated altogether, or filled up but three parts of the time allotted for prayer and praise; all at which I aim is to regulate the movements by the claims of life. Happy are they whose domestic and commercial engagements prevent not their visit to the house of God! and happy are they, too, who fear to neglect one duty for another. The chamber of sickness; the field of labour; the crowded street; the servant's hall; the mother's nursery; are no strange places with God; in their daily occupations the Lord's people enjoy the manifestations of his love—

> "Where'er they seek him he is found,
> And ev'ry place is hallow'd ground."

I offer no apology for introducing Mr. Newton's apposite remarks on this subject. "Be cautious," he says, "that you do not degenerate into the spirit of a *mere* hearer, so as to place the chief stress of your profession upon running hither and thither after preachers. There are many who are always on the wing; and without a due regard to what is incumbent on them in the shop, in the family, or in the closet, they seem to think they were sent into the world only to hear sermons, and to hear as many in a day as they

possibly can. Such persons may be fitly compared to Pharaoh's lean kine: they devour a great deal, but for want of a proper digestion, they do not flourish; their souls are lean; they have little solid comfort, and their profession abounds more in leaves than in fruit. If the twelve apostles were again upon earth, and you could hear them all every week, yet if you were not attentive to the duties of the closet; if you did not allow yourself time for reading, meditation and prayer; and if you did not likewise attend to the concernments of your particular calling, and the discharge of your duties in relative life, I should be more ready to blame your indiscretion, than to admire your zeal. Every thing is beautiful in its season; and if one duty frequently jostles out another, it is a sign either of a weak judgment, or of a wrong turn of mind. No public ordinances can make amends for the neglect of secret prayer; nor will the most diligent attendance upon them justify us in the neglect of those duties, which by the appointment and command of God we owe to society." Oh for that wisdom which cometh from above! that in all things we may approve ourselves as servants of the living God!

After all, there may be some among you unconscious of the believer's happiness in duty. Allow me to ask the reason of this: certainly, God has made ample provision for your joy, and even triumph, in obedience; and it is his revealed will that by faith in his promised assistance, you should go on your way rejoicing, even though precept involve you in difficulty. The error then is with you, not with God; and among the reasons of your darkness and distress, the following will perhaps strike you.

1. Your understandings on the plan of salvation are confused; you err in vision, and stumble in judgment; and, not being established in the truth, you confound cause with effect, faith with works, expecting joy and peace even when the heart is under the influence of unbelief. The work of Christ is finished. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in him, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." They were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that they *might be* holy and without blame before him in love, nor can they ever perish: because he lives, they must live also. But you have forgotten these important truths; or disregarded them as non-essentials; or, perhaps,

shunned them because others have abused them: and thus, while you have questioned the perfection of the Saviour's priesthood, or dishonoured the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, as if the atonement were inadequate to meet the demands of divine justice, and the power of grace insufficient to secure the final perseverance of the saints, you have denied yourselves the use of the truth as it is in Jesus; and while the heart has been unaffected by its recognitions, the life has been unassisted by its influence. "It is a good thing for the heart to be established with grace," for you cannot be happy in your work if carried about with every wind of doctrine. An error in judgment may disturb the peace of the soul, when it cannot effect a separation from the love of God. No galley-slave can work harder, or to less effect, than the christian, whose views of the plan of salvation are unscriptural.

2. A legal spirit prevents communion with God in duty: it nourishes pride under the garb of affected humility; takes the crown of gold from the ark of the covenant; and with the language of meekness on the lip, enthrones self-consequence on the heart. If conscious of having discharged your duties consistently, you indirectly ground a

plea on the work effected for the Lord's presence; and if conscience, placing all your efforts before the divine standard, discover your deficiencies, and press your unworthiness into the calculations you make of the nature and measure of enjoyments, then you conceive that God will neither bless your souls, nor accept your services, because they are impure, and these imperfect. With such a spirit, how can you expect to find Christ in duty? for while you thus pervert the clearest and most obvious truths of revelation to nourish, either your despondency in failure, or, your pride in success—the chastisements of the rod, not the blessings of the promise must be expected. "Their sorrows shall be multiplied, who hasten after another God;" and to idolize either your graces, or your works, by glorying in the former, and mingling merit with the latter, is to "quench the Spirit." The Lord will be honoured as Priest and King too; and with zeal to serve him, there must be a dependence on his merits for acceptance.

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him:
This he gives you,
'Tis his Spirit's rising beam.

3. Another reason of your bondage in duty, may be, that you have forgotten the character of God as your Heavenly Father; and, viewing him as a censorious judge, and yourselves rather as slaves than as children, the rod of terror awes when the sceptre of grace ought to allure. The principles of adoption *are* to mark and influence the believing character; this is the injunction, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us"—be godlike in your conversation and movements: but as *children* live and act. What will not a child do for so gracious and kind a Father? Forget, however, that you are children, and that God is your Father, and no arguments that can be used will be powerful enough to induce a persevering and delightful regard to the obligations of your high and holy calling.

> "Law and terrors do but harden,
> All the time they work alone:
> But a sense of blood-bought pardon,
> Soon dissolves the heart of stone."

4. Again. Perhaps you have been unwilling to yield to the divine command. Can you, when indisposed to serve God, expect the blessing promised to the diligent and persevering? Woe be

unto them that are at ease in Zion, for storms will gather around the indolent! He that knows his Lord's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; but the diligent soul shall be made fat. "The desire of the slothful killeth him: for his hands refuse to labour." "The sluggard will not sow by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing." My brethren, God loveth a *cheerful* giver; and a mind willing to labour in his cause shall not remain unblest: but on what ground rest your hopes of happiness, when, like the sluggard, you cry, "yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep?" certainly not on scriptural—for thus it appeals to the conscience of the slothful, "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Reluctance is the cause of much distress in duty.

5. Another reason, and the last I shall mention, of this distress is, that, too frequently, your own comfort, advantage, honour, and prosperity, weigh in your calculations, and the Lord's glory is partially or entirely forgotten. In prayer; in hearing the word; in surrounding his table; in

conversing with christian friends; in visiting the sick; in relieving the poor; in contributing your property to support the Lord's cause; in promoting the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in heathen lands; in distributing religious tracts among the poor at home; in teaching the children of sabbath schools; and in every other department of christian labour, how frequently have you lost sight of the glory of God! Selfish feelings and motives have been nourished by every shilling expended, by every sacrifice made, by every tear shed in the cause of God. This—this, my brethren, is one cause of the Lord's absence from your souls in duty: this feeling operates like blasting mildew on the fruit you bear, and the Sun of Righteousness refuses to shine on the withering herb. Your conversation cannot be right in motive, nor correct in application, if its end be not the glory of God; and it is not to him that converses, but to him that orders his conversation *aright*, that God has promised to shew his great salvation. "Whether therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are God's. And whatsoever ye do

in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him : knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ."

I shall close this part of my address with a few directions, anxious as I am that your harp should be tuned as well for the road as for the sanctuary ; that the father at his business, the mother in the nursery, the servant at his work, and the youth at his studies, should enjoy the fellowship with God which, in writing these pages, it has been my design to cultivate.

1. Remember you are not under the law as a covenant of works, but under grace. Christ has obeyed the precept, and suffered the penalty of the law for you, as Mediator of the new covenant; and by virtue of his propitiatory sacrifice, you are delivered for ever from its curse. "Verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." Hear this and rejoice. "For when you were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did

work in your members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now you are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein you were held, that you should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." You are under the charge and care of grace. Grace has provided for all your necessities; engaged to bestow her treasures upon you with her accustomed beneficence; erected a throne where you may meet your God and Father; opened a fountain for your sins and uncleanness; promised you her protection in this world, and an abundant entrance into the mansions of glory prepared for all who love God. Grace has translated you from the kingdom of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel; and is daily proving to you that though your responsibilities are awful, they are also pleasing, "for her ways are pleasantness and her paths peace."

2. Recollect, also, that your obedience is not to procure God's favour, but to evince your gratitude for mercies bestowed. His love is everlasting: it cannot be merited nor ever be repaid: yet, though your most devoted services fall far short of the acknowledgment you are bound to

make of its wondrous deeds, you must not, you dare not relinquish attempts, however humble they may be, to spread its fame.

"Brightness of the Father's glory,
Shall thy praise unutter'd lie?
Fly, my tongue, such guilty silence!
Sing the Lord who came to die.
From the highest throne in glory,
To the cross of deepest woe;
All to ransom guilty captives—
Flow my praise for ever flow."

3. "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Your success in the labours of love depends, in a great measure, upon your knowing that you have eternal life. You may reach heaven, and be numbered with the glorified, without ever having arrived at the full assurance of faith, "for whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved; and the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that *hope* in his mercy;" yet, without the spirit of adoption you cannot run the race set before you with comfort, nor enter the valley of the shadow of death with triumph. Life in the soul is an evidence of redemption, and a proof that you cannot perish; but, if guilt be not removed from your con-

sciences, if you have not come to the blood of sprinkling, you cannot be joyful in God as *your* Father and portion. Without an assurance of your personal interest in Christ, you may go on, but your progress without it must be slow; in doubt, and with a bare feeble hope in him, you will obey some of his commandments, for grace will teach you to live godly; yet without peace in believing you cannot serve him cheerfully nor extensively. The great business of your lives ought to be to glorify the Father for choosing you, the Son for redeeming you, and the Holy Ghost for regenerating you: but how can you glorify the God of *your* salvation, by walking in all the paths of holy obedience, while you remain in distressing doubt as to your interest in his unchanging love? The first point to be settled, is, the reality of your conversion, and the certainty of your interest in Jesus. If this be settled upon scriptural grounds; if your conduct and conversation prove that you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit; if your vital union to Christ be manifest by the fruits of righteousness; if you are sealed unto the day of redemption by that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance; and if He bear witness with your

spirits that you are the children of God, then indeed, and not till then, will you go on your way in duty rejoicing; then you will learn the holy art of doing much work in little time, with comparative ease to yourselves, and all your efforts will be directed to the glory of God. Gospel liberty will produce obedience, and faith in the promise, and devotedness to the God who gave it, must increase together; and when you are brought into the liberty of the gospel, "for where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," those mental powers which, during the period of soul trouble, turned upon yourselves in the momentous inquiry, "what shall I do to be saved?" will yield to the claims of his holy gospel. No ordinary services will then satisfy you; no dangers will deter you from prosecuting your work; onward you will move, for onward will be your motto. The joy of the Lord will be your strength; and by the discharge of one duty you will be prepared for the discharge of another. "If a man love me, he will keep my words. I will manifest myself to him." Is not the soul happy in the manifestations of the Lord's presence? Indeed it is! and if those manifestations

which change the desert into paradise, enliven the path of duty, who would not walk therein? "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith," &c.

4. Do not judge of the Lord's will by providences, but by promises; nor conclude that in the path of duty no trials await you. Duty leads to suffering; and in following the Lord's directions, heavy trials must be expected. It will be with you in truth, as it was with the disciples in fact. "Jesus constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida." They obeyed their Master, and were found in the path of duty. But mark the consequences. "And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew, and he saw them toiling in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them; and it was dark, and Jesus had not come unto them." In this case, suffering marked obedience; and while Jonah for rebel-

lion was overtaken by tempest, these disciples were exposed to danger in rendering homage to the Son of God. How mysterious are the Lord's ways! Peace and war; joy and sorrow; light and darkness, all mark, in their turn, the way of duty. But, my brethren, on one thing you may depend,—all the sufferings you endure in the path of obedience, are designed to promote your communion *with* God, to secure your dependence *upon* God, and to increase your happiness *in* God. Your graces are tried that you might try the promises; you are driven from the creature that you might not forget your resting-place; and brought nearer to the Lord by those afflictions which threaten your ruin. "Who then is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." And if he have not communion with the Lord beneath a cloudless sky, on the ocean where winds are pillowed, he will commune by faith in the stormy night, as the billows roll, with his wisdom, power, and faithfulness; and though for a moment, in the war of elements, he lose sight of Him who is mightier than the waves of the sea, the

wandering eye shall again fix on the heavenly Pilot, and everlasting song succeed the momentary sigh.

"My Saviour, can I follow thee,
When all is dark before?
When midnight rests upon the sea,
How can I reach the shore?
Oh let thy star of love but shine,
Though with a feeble ray;
'Twill gild the edge of ev'ry wave,
And light my gloomy way."

"God is my Father in Jesus, and I know he has bowels of the tenderest affection for me. I ought not, it would be base in me to question it, since he has shed his love abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost. His way is become mine. I have set out to walk with my divine Friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his presence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am seeking more knowledge, and for more experience of his abundant love to me in his beloved Son. And for this end I would walk with him in his way—not to buy his love, it is inestimable—not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot stand together—not that I may deserve it for my walk—not that he may give it me

for walking with him, but that in walking with him I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time as I hope by sense to enjoy it in eternity. Whatever blessing, strength, victory, or comfort, I stand in need of, I look to the fulness which he has laid up in Jesus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take possession of it, for nothing done in me, or by me, but in and for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by simple faith, I find I am enabled to go on well. The sense of his free, covenant, everlasting love keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight.

"This day, my soul, thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conscience, and love to him in thy heart—peace like his, flowing from the sense of his being perfectly reconciled to thee—love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Never forget that he is thy God, the God of peace. He stands related to thee in the dearest and most indissoluble bonds of love. He is thy Father in Jesus. Keep a sense of this always fresh upon thy mind, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Nothing will

be able to stop thee in the way to heaven, or to seduce thee out of it, but every thing will bring thee forward."*

Is this the experience and the practice of the christian who, being justified by faith, has peace with God, and rejoices in hope of his glory? Then, my brethren, emulate his confidence, and press toward the mark, for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

E. M.

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* Romaine.

PART II.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE FLESH, WITH ITS AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS, AND THE CONSEQUENT OBEDIENCE OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE, SECURED BY THE PEACE OF GOD RULING IN HIS HEART.

MY DEAR BRETHREN IN THE FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL,

"LET the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Coloss. iii. 15.) A more important exhortation than this cannot be found in the writings of St. Paul. It is one of those practical remedies for moral failures which, whenever applied, produces the most salutary and beneficial effects: nor, without its daily application, can any man maintain that spirituality of mind, which is life, and which sheds a hallowing influence over his tempers and actions. I have, already, reminded you of the obedience you are expected to yield, and of the happiness it is your privilege to enjoy in keeping God's command-

ments: and, while the transition from the facts admitted to the duties they involve has been natural and easy, and such as must have commended itself to your consciences, I despair of your ever reaching that high standard of spiritual dignity, and of realizing that full measure of sanctified bliss, to which that commendation tends, except the peace of God rule in your hearts. To all the directions of the bible, and to the appeals of the ministry you will, perhaps, reply, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would." (Gal. v. 17.) But are there no means of weakening the old, and of strengthening the new man, that, upon the subjection of the one, and the prosperity of the other, there may be a more full surrender of body, soul, and spirit, to the Lord Jesus? To this important question I now invite your serious attention; and depending upon the promised assistance of the Holy Spirit, hope to prove that the crucifixion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and the consequent obedience of the life, are secured by the peace of God ruling in the heart. Pray for

divine teaching in this matter.—"Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

The arrangements of infinite mercy for the salvation of man admit of systematic analysis: and as their several scales have been reduced by the sacred witers to an organization of doctrine, of experience, and of precept, the attentive and persevering student of the holy scriptures can exhibit at outline of

> "Redemption's mystic plan,
> That salutary source of life to man."

All, however, is not gold that glitters; nor do all those men who write or speak of the gospel, enjoy its peaceful, and manifest its sanctifying influence. To know the truth as a revealed system, is one thing; to receive the truth as the power of God unto salvation, is another: and while knowledge without enjoyment may satisfy the nominal professor, the true believer cannot rest in, nor be satisfied with, the form of godliness. The doctrines of grace are not axioms, cheerless as the disquisitions of heathen philosophy, but elements of life; and he who understands the loving-kindness of the Lord and has tasted that he is gracious, is conscious of the efficacy of the gospel,

having received it in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and is desirous of bearing much fruit, that the Lord may be glorified.

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, rules in the heart in which Christ is formed the hope of glory; and as nothing is more essential to prosperity in the divine life than the existence and reign of peace in the soul, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13.

First, the peace that rules in the heart must be considered in its relation to God, its author. The God of Jacob is the God of peace; and is known, as such, through revelation only. The world by wisdom knows not God: though the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy work, no trace of creating power can make the discovery a helpless sinner needs. To tell man, guilty and condemned, where salvation is to be obtained, and who is the Saviour, is the province of revelation. He possesses no intuitive light on this subject, nor, in his search for mercy, can human reason point his way. No records but those of inspira-

tion proclaim deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; in these, only, we learn that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; that he can be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. The act of choosing sinners in Christ, is attributed to the Father; not that his love was anterior to the love of Christ, or to that of the Holy Ghost's, for "there are three that bear record in heaven, and these three are one:" yet, as in the administration of grace, order and regularity are two of its constituent peculiarities, and as each of the Divine Persons in the Godhead shares the glory of the mighty scheme, while the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies, the Father's love is described as the source of spiritual blessings. God, the offended party, devised means for the salvation of the offending, adequate in nature and influence to their exigencies, and to the demands of his righteous law. "He so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life!" (John iii. 16.) To display the holiness of his nature, and the immutability of his law, he

appointed, in the person of his Son, a sacrifice for sin; to prove the nature of his love, and the riches of his grace, he passed by transgressors, and bruised their Surety. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; for the transgression of his people was he stricken." (Isa. liii.) "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) Mercy triumphed in relieving human misery; justice was satisfied with the atonement made for iniquity; God was angry with sin, yet loved the sinner, and through the Saviour he appointed, became at peace with the saved. "Fury," he says, "is not in me:" (Isa. xxvii. 4.) his sword is sheathed, his thunders are silent, he is pleased with Christ, and pleased with all those whom he hath purchased with his blood. He is at peace with them—no terror frowns his eye, or wrath surrounds his throne. He rests in his love, will not alter his purpose; and his gifts and callings are without repentance. He has

blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; and the issue of his providential dispensations will manifest his care over them, and his love to them. Fury is not in him—the poverty that seizes, the fire that tries them, is peaceful; their afflictions are sent and controlled by a God of love for their profit; they shall be as severe as necessary, as mild as possible. To his tried people he thus speaks —hear it, ye mourners, and rejoice,—he speaks as a friend. "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." (Isa. liv. 8—10.) The God with whom you have to do, is a God of peace, and your conceptions of his character, as peaceful, are essential to your comfort. Your unbelief, indeed, cannot make him

unfaithful; yet every view taken of his power, and every providence that exercises patience, will increase distress, unless you believe that you are dependent upon a God of peace. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end;" (Jer. xxix. 11.) and however severely he may try you, for his gold must be purified, he will be mindful of his covenant, and prove that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm ciii. 13.)

Secondly. Peace was procured by Jesus Christ. The plan of salvation, originating in the grace of the Eternal Three, was executed by Christ, who, dying the just for the unjust, brought sinners unto God. Salvation is by grace. Man has destroyed himself; is the victim of his own apostasy; and if saved, an infinite price must be paid for his ransom. He has broken God's law in thought, word, and deed; and entailed upon himself its threatened penalties. By it, he cannot be justified; it is unyielding in its decisions; it will not revoke its sentence; nor withhold its merited punishments. Before sin entered, he lived in communion with God; but his rebellion

armed the attributes of Deity against him, and rendered their position, once pleasing and delightful, hostile to his comfort, and full of terror to his guilty conscience. God and man, in consequence of the fall, became contending parties; the thunders of heaven uttered their execrations, and lightnings blazed his awful doom. Reprieve, however, was granted, provisions having been made for his salvation. By his Father's permission, and at his Father's call, Christ undertook the work of redemption, engaging to satisfy divine justice by answering all the demands of the righteous law in his perfect obedience, and vicarious death; by bearing in his own body on the tree all the sins of the people whose cause he mediates, and by enduring the punishment those sins deserved. This work he finished, "blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Coloss. ii. 14.) He appeased the wrath of heaven; destroyed the sting of death; divested the grave of her power; and made peace by his blood. "Who," then, "shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ

that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) All judicial conflict is over: the Prince of Peace is enthroned in glory: and, from the once dense cloud, issues, across the cheerless desert, twilight, more peaceful than the dawn of creation, when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.

The motive to this stupendous undertaking was, love—love, strong as death, mightier than the grave. He saw the arm uplifted for the destruction of his people; presented himself to the blow in their names; and voluntarily consented to die that they might live. He would not, he could not, suffer them to perish: he knew the sufferings he must endure, yet, he becomes incarnate, and, having obeyed his Father's will, prepares to offer himself a sacrifice for sin, and to fight for his people. See—the conflict is near. Yonder stands Justice with the iron rod—with the cup, into which the vials of divine vengeance have been poured—that rod he must feel, that cup he must drink. He approaches—he drinks—he prays, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." (Matt. xxvi.

39.) He tastes—his human nature shudders, and again he begs that, if the removal of the cup be possible, it may pass from him. He thirsts, and pants. His cries are dolorous—on his eyelids sit the shadow of death—the vital fluid starts from the vein—he pleads exemption, but justice is inflexible—he *must die*. Then, summoning to the aid of his human nature the succours of the divine, he submits to the stroke; "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Isa. liii. 7.) He takes the cup of trembling and drinks, nor leaves a dreg behind. Convulsed, the earth discloses her slain — the rocks divide—the sun is shorn of his glory—the songs of heaven are suspended—angels minister to the incarnate sufferer, and there is darkness over the earth until the ninth hour. But the scene brightens — all heaven is summoned to witness the issue of the mystic war—the Saviour cries, "it is finished!—it is finished!" The angels,

> "Who brought his chariot from above,
> To bear him to his throne;
> Clap their triumphant wings, and cry,
> The glorious work is done."

The conflict is over—the storms have wasted

their fury—the Father smiles on the deserted soul of his beloved Son—(beloved though bruised)—Satan retires confounded—mercy pours forth her harmony of song—the harps of the skies are toned to unaccustomed melody—hope smiles—faith triumphs—God and the sinner meet, and meet to part no more for ever. Hail! thou unexampled lover of thy chosen race! To thee belong the wisdom, and the power, and the glory; on thy head be the crown!

"Hail, Prince of life, for ever hail,
Whose unexampled love!
Moved thee to quit the realms of bliss,
And royalties above.

"Go, return, immortal Saviour,
Leave thy footstool, take thy throne;
Thence return, and reign for ever,
Be the kingdoms all thy own."

Thirdly. As man by nature is alienated from God, he must be born again before the reconciliation thus effected by Jesus Christ can influence or delight him. The remedy for human guilt is the atonement; and it is the province of the Holy Spirit to apply it. "By the law is the knowledge of sin;" and those convictions of human depravity which invariably precede a reli-

ance on the Saviour for pardon, are the results of its application to the heart. It arrests, tries, and condemns the sinner; and when he is thus convinced of sin, his apprehensions of death are vivid; he regards God as unpropitious and angry, and being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, trembles on the verge of despair."*

Those who have thus been led and taught can feelingly enter into the experience of St. Paul. "Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me; and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy;

* As some of the Lord's people are more deeply convinced of sin than others, it may here be necessary to observe, that, that degree of conviction only is absolutely necessary which teaches us our need of a Saviour, and leads us to him for salvation. God is a Sovereign, and in this respect as in all others, deals with his people as he pleases.

and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom. vii. 7—12.)

The Holy Spirit having, in this way, convinced them of their true state by nature, and of the impossibility of justification by the deeds of the law, teaches them to cry for mercy, and awakens in their hearts a lively hope of deliverance from their perilous condition. He reminds them of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and of the righteousness which justifieth the ungodly; bids them welcome to the refuge, yea, assures them that the provisions of the gospel are for the poor, for the halt, for the maimed, for the blind; that whosoever will, may come, and take the water of life freely; that whosoever cometh to Christ, he will in no wise cast out; and that whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never perish. But cheerful as are these tidings, and encouraging as may be their influence, they have not yet, by believing, entered into rest; and scenes more terrific than they behold could not be pourtrayed. Conscious alike of their need of Christ, and of their inability to apply the benefits of his atonement; knowing that, as to redeem from the curse of the law was the work of the Redeemer, to impart the virtue

of his sacrifice to the heart is the work of the Spirit, they cry,

> " Descend, Holy Spirit, the dove,
> And visit a sorrowful breast;
> My burden of guilt to remove,
> And bring me assurance of rest.
> Thou only hast power to relieve,
> A sinner o'erwhelm'd with his load,
> The sense of redemption to give,
> And sprinkle his conscience with blood."

The moment of deliverance, at length, arrives; and, by the blood of the covenant, they are sent out of the pit wherein is no water. Guilt is removed from the conscience, the love of God shed abroad in the heart: returning unto their rest, the Lord having dealt bountifully with them, their souls are delivered from death, their eyes from tears, and their feet from falling; slavish fear is cast out; the Holy Spirit is to them a Spirit of wisdom, of power, of love, of joy, and of a sound mind; and dwells in their hearts, not as a spirit of bondage, but of adoption, crying, Abba Father; teaching them to live by faith on Christ, to walk by faith with God in communion, and to recline on his bosom amid the speechless raptures of conscious bliss. Their heaven now begins,—they know the joyful sound; walk in the light of the

Lord's countenance; rejoice in his name all the day; and in his righteousness are exalted above the fear of death, to the happy privileges of those who know that their iniquities are forgiven, and their sin covered. "Blessed are they that are in such a case, yea, blessed is the people whose God is the Lord." "They go out with joy, and are led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills break forth before them into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands." God is at peace with them, they are at peace with God: their delight, their communion is mutual; and they sing that new song which none can learn but the redeemed. Afflictions are now reckoned not worthy to be compared with the glory already manifested in the soul, and shortly to be revealed in heaven; and as faith in the Saviour's blood produces confidence in the Father's care, reliance on his promises, and submission to his will, they cheerfully obey his directions, and rejoice in being thought worthy to suffer shame for his sake. His service, even to sacrifice and to death, is perfect freedom; influenced by principles corresponding to their new names and heavenly natures, they run the way of his commandments with delight, and walk in love as dear children: for as there

are privileges which cannot be used, and duties which cannot be discharged till the peace of God rules in the heart, there are sacrifices which cannot but be made, and feelings which cannot but be evinced when brought into the liberty of the gospel. To whom much is given, of the same is much required. Happy ! happy spirit ! thou art indeed filled with all joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

" The world, indeed, makes little account of this, and imagines there is nothing more easily attempted than to please God, and obtain the forgiveness of guilt ; but the real penitent, that has wandered in dark ways, and through a night of desertion, severely has felt and knows what sin is, and has had a perception in his conscience, how formidable are the terrors of Almighty justice, and the devouring flames of divine wrath. All sense of pleasure is lost to such a one ; and he strives above all things with restless anguish and groans, to gain the discovery that his sins are pardoned ; which sure pledge of salvation he no sooner receives a glimpse of, rising in his mind, but he will declare with David, " Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is

covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." The believer is then as much eased and animated as if an insuperable load was moved and taken off from him; all his former fear, anxiousness, distress of conscience, vanish away, disappear; he is become possessed of the greatest peace, and embraced into the sweet bosom of his reconciled God and Father. A paradise seems to open to him, after having been forced to wander so long in a bare and comfortless desert.

"The foundation of all this blessedness is this:—that when the soul has faith, a knowledge of Christ, and the ineffable virtue and value in his bleeding wounds; when it has clear and believing sights of this, and the Holy Spirit assists to enlighten it in the views of his expiating death, and the power of his resurrection, what can it do otherwise but think with fullest persuasion that all his transgressions are purged away by the pardoning mercy of God, and for ever hid in the sweet savour of this perfect sacrifice; nay, those offences that were counted the most enormous, an apprehension of the unpardonableness of which faith had not strength enough to overcome, even *these*, when set in competition with the more

large and immense sea of Immanuel the Redeemer's incomprehensible blood and merits, are but as a drop to the universal ocean! Nor are his remaining indwelling infirmities, that yet he is very far from making light of, and is his daily study to be purified from, able, while he is walking in the light, to force him in quitting hold of that sweet heavenly confidence he enjoys from Christ in the Father."*

He is not, however, perfect; and though the joy of the Lord is his strength, he cannot boast an exemption from suffering. Rest introduces conflict; and war with sin and Satan is the issue of conversion. Happy in the Lord, yet miserable in himself, he exclaims, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death;" and finding another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, he is frequently led into captivity; so that, while he is filled with joy and peace in believing, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against

* Zimmerman on the Knowledge of Christ. A work translated from the German by Brown, at the request of that late revered servant of Christ, the Rev. James Hervey, who termed it his bosom companion, and said, "It was the first book that introduced him to a clear light and understanding of the gospel; and the first that had been blest to his experiencing any true established rest and quiet in his soul." See preface to translation.

the flesh, and these being contrary the one to the other, he cannot do the things that he would. To be carnally minded is death: to be spiritually minded is life and peace. If he, therefore, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, he shall live. Two points must now be examined. The first is, that the crucifixion of the old man is essential to a happy progress in the divine life. The second, that the peace of God ruling in the heart assists this crucifixion, and strengthens the believer for his daily conflict and work.

"The old man," is a scriptural expression, and is used to denote the depravity of human nature, and the corruption, or sin, that remains in the heart of every regenerated person; and if the following scriptures be examined, it will be found that other phrases, beside the one in question, are used to express the same thing. (Eph. iv. 22. Col. iii. 9. Rom. vi. 6. vii. 18—21. John iii. 6. Gal. v. 17.* In every believer there are two opposite principles, nature and grace; two contrary laws, the law of the mind, and the law

* In these passages, "the old man"—"my flesh"—"another law"—"the law of sin"—"the body of this death"—"the evil that is present with me"—"the flesh that lusteth"—are expressions designed to represent the sin or depravity that remains in the heart after regeneration.

of sin. Both natures are distinct and contrary in their designs; the flesh opposes the spirit in all her movements, the spirit opposes the flesh in all its exercises: the one delights in what the other abhors; one condemns what the other approves. "The fact is, the two principles live at one time, act at one time, and will be found in one and the same person at all times and in all things while he lives upon earth."* Grace must conquer, but nature exerts sufficient power to render the conflict severe; nature will not relinquish her efforts for victory, grace cannot; for while Satan regulates and encourages the flesh, Christ animates and strengthens the spirit.

Indwelling sin is termed a law; and "a law," observes Dr. Owen, "is taken either properly for a directive rule, or improperly for an operative effective principle, which seems to have the force of a law. In its first sense, it is a moral rule, which directs and commands; and sundry ways moves and regulates the mind and the will as to the things which it requires and forbids. This is evidently the general nature and work of a law. Some things it commands; some things it forbids

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* Serle.

with rewards and penalties which move and impel men to do the one and avoid the other. Hence, in a secondary sense, an inward principle that moves and inclines constantly unto any action, is called a law. The principle that is in the nature of every thing moving and carrying it to its own end and rest, is called the law of nature. In this respect, every inward principle that inclineth and urgeth unto operations and actions suitable to itself is a law. See Rom. viii. 2. The powerful and effectual working of the Spirit and grace of Christ in the hearts of believers is called the law of the Spirit of life. And for this reason does the apostle here call indwelling sin a law. It is a powerful and effectual indwelling principle inclining and pressing unto actions agreeable and suitable to its own nature. Now, that which we observe from this name, or term, of a law, attributed unto sin, is, that there is an exceeding efficacy and power in the remainders of indwelling sin in believers, with a constant working towards evil. Believers have experience of the power and efficacy of indwelling sin. They find it in themselves; they find it as a law. It hath a self-evidencing efficacy to them that are alive to discern it; they that find not its power are

under its dominion. Whosoever contend against it shall know and find that it is present with them, that it is powerful in them. He shall find the stream to be strong who swims against it, though he who rolls along with it be insensible of it."*

The subjection of the old man, is, therefore, essential to the believer's happiness: for whence arises the rebellion of the will against God, and the indisposition of the heart to serve him, but from indwelling sin? These are the affections, not of the new, but of the old man; they are the fruits of the flesh, and the operations of that law of sin which wars against the soul. Afflictions may occasion rebellion, just as sin by the holy commandment takes occasion to work in us all manner of concupiscence, but the old man is the cause of it. Were our wills absorbed in God's will, and perfectly reconciled to his ways, with consciences purged from dead works by the blood of Christ, we should be as happy in the furnace as Paul and Silas were in the prison; the cross would increase, not diminish our comfort; we should go into the gloomy vale where adversity reigns with as much delight as we ascend the

* Dr. Owen, v. 13, pp. 6, 8.

mount, where rise the luxuries of life; God would be blessed, as well when he takes, as when he gives; leaning on our Father's arm and confiding in his care, we should rejoice that the management of our concerns, whether trifling or momentous, is with him; not daring to dictate how he ought to reveal his love, nor the way in which he should lead, his procedure, when dark and mysterious, would satisfy our faith, and excite our confidence. Though he slay us, we should trust in him, exclaiming with a christian in an enviable state of mind, "I have seemed to see a need for every thing God gives me, and to want nothing he denies me." But how, amid the painful vicissitudes of this life, can we be happy, rejoice in tribulation for Christ's sake, and sing the Lord's song in this strange land, if the old man be not crucified with Christ? As the deeds of the body are mortified, submission to the will of God is easy; without this mortification, resignation is impossible. St. Paul, on one occasion said, "I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not."—(Rom. vii. 18.) And on another, forming, indeed, a striking con-

trast, and leading to the most delightful conclusions,—"Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." (Phil. iv. 11, 12.) And why, it may be asked, cannot we, at all times, and in all circumstances, thus yield to divine arrangements? Why are we not able to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake? the *main* reason is, the old man in us is less mortified than it was in him; self is not so fully denied; the flesh is not so effectually crucified. The old man was alive in St. Paul when he gave this remarkable proof of his reconciliation to the will of God; the perfect satisfaction, therefore, with which he viewed the divine appointments, could neither be traced to the eradication of indwelling sin, nor be attributed to any natural inactivity of the corrupt principles of the human heart to oppose that which is good: the crucifixion of the old man, *not his annihilation*, nor even a change in his disposition, is all which can be accomplished here; at this the apostle aimed,

and by grace it was most happily secured. The process and the object of pursuit are precisely the same with us. To be resigned to the will of God is to be happy; but that happiness is dependent on the mortification of the flesh with its affections and lusts. As grace triumphs over nature, and the inward man is renewed, the internal conflict will proceed to the honour of the great Captain of salvation, and to the settled comfort of the soul in the knowledge of God.

"Act but the infant's gentle part,
Give up to love thy willing heart;
No fondest parents' melting breast
Yearns like thy God's to make thee blest.

Taught its dear mother soon to know,
The simplest babe its love can shew;
Bid bashful, servile fear retire,—
The task no labour can require.

The sov'reign Father good and kind
Wants but to have his child resign'd;
Wants but thy yielding heart—no more—
With his rich gifts of grace to store.

He to thy soul no anguish brings,
From thine own stubborn will it springs;
That foe but crucify, thy bane,
Nought shalt thou know of frowns nor pain.

Come, backward soul, to God resign,
Peace, his best blessing, shall be thine;
Boldly recumbent on his care,
Cast thy *felt* burden only there."

We now observe that the old man is governed, and brought into subjection, by the peace of God ruling in the heart. Guilt on the conscience weakens grace and strengthens nature; and as every species of existence has its element, when the soul lives below her privileges, ceases to hold fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, and, by consequence, loses her spirituality, indwelling sin rises to more than ordinary vigour; and, on the contrary, when the heart is well purified by faith in the blood of Christ, and the conscience is made and kept peaceful by an application of the atonement, the deeds of the body are mortified. The closer we live to the cross, the more entirely will our affections be weaned from the world; and the subjection of natural feeling, the enlargement of the soul in the ways of God, the aboundings of spiritual life, are the results of peace ruling in the heart. He who is made free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, will walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and if he walk in the Spirit, he shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh: for when conscience joins issue with justice to proclaim his reconciliation to God, his affections become heavenly; the world has but little influ-

ence on his mind; faith is active in realizing the efficacy of the atonement, in drawing water from the wells of salvation; hope is lively in her apprehensions, and love ardent and impassioned in her desires. Then, he knows that he is the Lord's; that, as he is bought with a price, his body and spirit are the Lord's; and he labours to yield his members as instruments unto righteousness. What peaceful hours he now enjoys! how happy are his exercises! Faith carries all his care to Christ, and returns laden with blessings from his fulness; faith triumphs, because grace reigns; and works, because peace rules: the soul is purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit, and then rejoices in God, as her God, believing, that he will guide her with his counsel, and afterward receive her to glory.

"Take heed, my brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Unbelief promotes the growth of the old man, and is one of the most formidable enemies of the new. It is employed by Satan to hinder communion with Christ, and to disturb his peace in the soul. If faith decline, the capabilities of indwelling sin to distress you, (for destroy you it cannot) will increase; the lusts

of the flesh will bear you away captive; and, before you are aware of the tempter's access to the heart, he will enter. Remember, that peace entered the soul by believing the record which God gave of his Son, and that *only* by believing can it be preserved. Faith precedes peace in the order of gospel liberty; and joy springs from the peace that faith produces. A life of faith is essential to a life of peace; and the faith, from which peace arises, is justifying, or, that which has for its object, principally, the blood and righteousness of Christ. The more you know of Christ as Priest, the more cheerfully will you bow to his sceptre as King. The heart not shielded by faith in the atonement, is easily pierced by the fiery darts of the wicked one; and the very attempt to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts by any other mode than by prayer to the Holy Ghost for his sanctifying influence, than by faith in the Redeemer's sufferings, at any other place than at the cross, will vest your adversary with power which he will not fail to employ against you. It is true, he who is governed by natural principles, may preserve himself from those immoralities of conduct and perversions of right feeling, which ruin the health

of the profligate, and blast the reputation of the dishonest; but this process, well as far as it goes, cannot avail to the *crucifixion* of the old man: vicious habits may be curbed, and a moral tone be given to feeling, but while iniquity is checked, a self-righteous spirit may be fostered. Thousands escape the giddy vortex of dissipation, who perish at the imaginary shrine of human merit. But, to him who lives upon a crucified Saviour, and goes forth both to his battle and to his work in the strength of the Lord, victory is sure. The peace of God, ruling in the heart, curbs the old man both in its profane and pharisaical propensities; it arms the soul against sin, and induces a more entire dependence on the merits of Christ for acceptance with God; it elevates and chastens the affections, while it assists and regulates their prosecution, for *His* honour who died that we might live: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.) "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

With these convictions and assurances, and with peace enthroned on the heart, the believer is prepared for conflict with Satan, with the world, and specially with indwelling sin. He is taught, and enabled "to put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; to be renewed in the spirit of his mind, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and in true holiness." (Eph. iv. 22.) Peace is his safeguard; and, assisted by the Holy Ghost, (for peace ruling, is the Holy Ghost reigning,) it leaves no avenue to his heart unclosed, no passion unwatched, no sense unrestrained. In temptation it raises a cry to the great deliverer for his assistance, and repels the tempter with, "how shall I do this great wickedness and sin against my God?" how can I crucify the Saviour afresh, and put him to an open shame? He is my Lord, and him only will I serve. "Get thee behind me, Satan; he teaches my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."

> "He makes the glorious victory mine,
> And his shall be the praise."

By faith I live, walk, and triumph: I am the feeblest child in my Father's family; yet, strength-

ened by his Spirit, I stand in the evil day. His peace rules me, his word guides me. The sense I have of interest in his favour keeps me humble and makes me joyful; he discovers to me my poverty, teaches me to seek his promised blessings, and supplies all my need according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. He secures my dependence upon himself by keeping me inwardly poor; and as I see and feel my nothingness, he shews me my completeness in his Son. The world becomes less and less interesting; Christ increasingly precious. When brought low, he helps me; when distressed, he comforts me; and by various disappointments, teaches me to depend upon him for all my temporal and spiritual mercies. He enables me to glorify him passively, by receiving from his fulness, and grace for grace; and actively, by praising him for those supplies of his Spirit, which are freely vouchsafed to meet my daily exigencies. To his cross I am encouraged to repair with all my infirmities and my difficulties; to him I breathe the plaintive sigh; and before I call, he answers; and while I am yet speaking, he hears. My affections are more intensely fixed on his glorious person; he makes me willing to be his servant

and his child; and as my happiness depends on being his, on being conformed to his image, and on living to his glory, "what things were gain to me, those I count loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. iii. 8.) Oh thou blessed! blessed Jesus, "whom have I in heaven but thee! and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." With thee, and thy peace ruling in my heart, I am joyful even in tribulation; and amid the anticipations of the tomb, my brightest hopes are awakened. Yes, I have all, and abound: for having thee, what else can I desire? thou hast given me the earnest of the Spirit, the foretaste of glory; and ere a few more fleeting days have passed, I hope to see thee as thou art; to awake up in thy likeness, and to be for ever satisfied. But, knowing that thou hast done all things well, and being satisfied with thy determinations, though to die *now* would be gain, "all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." (Job xiv. 14.)

As every believer mourns declensions in the life and power of grace, "and is subject unto many decays, partly by surprisals in temptation," it is of importance to know by what means it

pleases God to maintain in the heart that happy state of things to which an allusion has just been made. God, is a God of order; and his work in the hearts of his people is begun and carried on by the administration of laws which he himself has established, and from which, in the executions of his plans, he never deviates: for however free and sovereign be the reign of grace, she rules by a settled process, and conducts her operations by a regularity which nothing can disturb. It must, then, be admitted that, while there are blessings to be received and enjoyed on earth, there is an appointed medium through which they flow; and, that to receive them, we must be numbered with those to whom they are promised. To rejoice with the believer, we must believe; and while it is certain, they who are born of God shall live for ever, it is, also, certain, that if we walk carelessly before the Lord, we shall incur his displeasure and receive his chastisement.

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit: he produces and maintains it; and as it cannot rule in the heart when guilt is upon the conscience, infirmity and failure disturbs its blessed reign. Whatever, therefore, is calculated to bring the heart into

subordination to the will of God, and to induce sanctity of life, must promote the reign of peace; and on the contrary, whatever pollutes the affections, dissipates the mind, and indisposes it for communion with Christ, prevents it. How often is the Spirit grieved! and how innumerable are those incidents which separate us from our beloved! How, then, can peace be preserved, and by what means can its reign be continued? Isaiah at once meets the difficulty; "Thou wilt," said he, "keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. xxvi. 3.) To stay upon God is the christian's privilege; but it is an act of faith, and can be done by faith only. Faith can stay no where but on God, and its reclension on him renders the christian stable amid the fluctuations of feeling and the changes of life, and prepares him for any conflict into which he may be thrown. Is he burdened? with his mind stayed upon God he is supported, for underneath him are the everlasting arms, and the eternal God is his refuge. Is he journeying to a land of rest? he steps on with confidence, for he leans on Jesus his guide; he descends the valley and climbs the rugged mount without fear. Is he called to

fight his way to the kingdom, and to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ? are his enemies mighty and numerous, and is he naturally weak and timid? he fights well—he smiles at Satan's rage, and sings defiance to the gates of hell; nothing shakes his confidence; and even in the field he rejoices as if every foe were slain, as if he were proclaimed and crowned a conqueror. "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." Is he persecuted for righteousness sake? he is happy even in the prison or at the stake; and at midnight, though in chains, sings praises to his God. Is he poor in this world? are his providential supplies for himself and family but few? yea, is the flock cut off from the fold, and is there no herd in the stall? he prays, and waits, and believes that his Heavenly Father will provide what is necessary. Is he launched on the sea of life? does tempest threaten his ruin, as if the ocean were his cradle, and the wave his pillow? he sleeps as safely and sings as sweetly as if in a calm, and "with Christ in the vessel he smiles at the storm." Is he tempted by Satan, who, standing at his right hand to resist and

accuse him, echos the curses of the law he has broken, and pourtrays the mount that burns? he is quiet from fear of evil; and however just be the accusations, knowing that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin, he points to the cross where hung the victim for his guilt, and if he weep (for a sight of that mournful tree melts his heart) he weeps for the Lamb that was slain, and his tears are tears of joy. Is he conscious of the near approach of death? he gazes upon the king of terror with a smile, and, looking unto Jesus, cries, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Does he anticipate "the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds," when, amid blazing elements and assembled millions, he will see the Judge on his throne? he sings,

> "Bold shall I stand in that great day,
> For who ought to my charge shall lay?
> While through his blood absolv'd I am,
> From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

But how, it may be inquired, can we account for this stability and joy? At the approach of death and judgment the wicked tremble: and even many of the redeemed are all their life-time

subject to bondage through the fear of death—but *this* man is always confident—and, indeed, *well he may be*—for see, his mind is stayed on the God of Peace; he leans on the Prince of Peace; and the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he is an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, how can he be otherwise than calm and happy! Did he stay upon any thing out of God he would fluctuate and lose his peace; and however apparently stable might be the object of his dependence, he would not, he could not, be joyful. But, stayed on the Lord, he is kept in perfect peace. He possesses peace; he found it when he found Christ, and through Christ had access, by the Spirit, to the Father; and it is preserved, for the God on whom he stays is the God of his salvation; a God that never changes, a rock that never moves; and while he stays here, nothing can move him. He is *kept* in peace—in *perfect peace.*—Observe this, he does not keep himself, but the God on whom he depends keeps him in peace, and so completely absorbs his attention, and occupies his faith, that his concern is not, how he shall stand the trying day, brave this shock, bear this load, and manage when heart and flesh fail;—No—he is enabled to leave all

these things with God; he has confidence in his care and affection; he is willing that he should choose the cup he shall drink and the road he shall take; his concern is to glorify his Heavenly Father, and to delight himself in the abundance of peace and truth. He has now no time, nor inclination, to be sinfully anxious about this life, for he reads his title to a better; and as he knows that all things concerning his life and death are settled, that he cannot have one affliction more than the Lord pleases to send him; that both the inward and the outward cross are necessary for his well-being as a child of God, inasmuch, as sanctified afflictions are among the means the Spirit uses to keep him both humble and happy; that he shall die when, and where, and how his Heavenly Father pleases; that on leaving this mortal body he shall enter the kingdom prepared for him, and be for ever with, and for ever happy in, the Lord. Knowing this, his understanding having been reduced to practise, he patiently "waits the great teacher death," exclaiming, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will trust and not be afraid."

In this way is peace preserved, and by these means does it rule. Oh! that we may recline

on the blessed Jesus till, delivered from every foe, and sheltered from every storm, we unite with the spirits of the just made perfect in ascribing wisdom, and power, and honour, and glory, and blessing to the Lamb that was slain.

How delightful are *his* anticipations whose mind is stayed upon the Lord! Who that listens to his musings can pronounce him unblest! Is he not happy? amid his contemplations on the love of Jesus, and as faith waits its full disclosure, these thoughts strike him—

"But how must his celestial voice
Make my enraptur'd heart rejoice,
When I in glory hear him.
While I before the heavenly gate,
For everlasting entrance wait,
And Jesus on his throne of state,
Invites me to come near him.

Come in, thou blessed, sit by me,
With mine own life I ransom'd thee,
Come, taste my perfect favour;
Come in, thou happy spirit come,
Thou now shalt dwell with me at home,
Ye blissful mansions make him room,
For he must stay for ever."

My brethren, let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and the bliss of this man is your's, with all his capabilities for extensive and persevering

obedience. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

E. M.

PART III.

A CAUTION AGAINST THE ABUSES OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP; WITH DIRECTIONS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT: DESIGNED TO ASSIST THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE SOCIAL CIRCLE.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

THE friendship of the world is enmity with God; and even human associations, professedly christian, may lose the sanctity of their character, and destroy that spirituality they are designed to promote. To be cautious, therefore, in the selection of companions, and to regulate the principles of companionship, is at once your duty and privilege.

Knowledge of the Saviour is increased by the use of means; and when you meet for spiritual communion, the conversation being in heaven, and the love of Christ the absorbing theme, a halo of glory is thrown around the social circle; and the interchange of thought, on subjects bearing the impress of eternity, leads to the most delightful conclusions. "As in water, face

answereth to face, so the heart of man to man:" and, "did not our heart burn within us? is an interrogation that frequently arises out of fellowship with those, whose fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Come, and hear what God has done for my soul, is a cheering invitation; and the details of the rich in faith are encouraging to the weak believer. When christians declare the way in which God has led them; and how, to use the language of Mr. Romaine, "he has endeared himself to their hearts by continual favours;" their brethren, who either know or seek the truth, are refreshed; the Saviour, whose deeds are rehearsed, rises in their esteem, and they join in ascribing all honour and glory, to him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the countenance of his friend;" for "as ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." Faith in her exercises, is assisted by faith in her details; love is moved in her efforts to please, by love in her attempts to console; joy, by being communicated, increases; and the coalition of spiritual feeling is the identity of interest, and the union of effort,

to crown the Saviour Lord of all. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Sweet emblem of the bliss of heaven, where pleasure rolls her living flood! "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Happy, indeed, are those christians who meet for spiritual communion! Its legitimate tendency is the purification of the believing heart, and the increase of joy and peace to the honour of the great Master of these religious assemblies. The Lord delights in the fellowship of his people; hearkens to their sighs as well as to their songs; draws near to them in the manifestations of his Spirit; and enriches them with his opening and closing benediction, "Peace be unto you." When they look, he smiles; when they call, he answers; nor will he suffer them to meet in vain when they meet for his glory; he blesses them, and makes them blessings to each other: so that the backslider has been restored, the mourner

comforted, the wavering established, the youthful convert nourished — by spiritual conversation. "The tongue of the wise is as choice silver; and understanding, being a well-spring of life to him that hath it, the words of his mouth are as deep waters, and the well spring of wisdom as a flowing brook." How beautiful, how expressive, are the petitions of Mr. Newton! Oh that they were admitted into the regulations of social life! then would the cottage of the poor, and the drawing room of the rich, be as the house of God and the gate of heaven :—

"May he by whose kind care we meet,
Send his good Spirit from above;
Make our communications sweet,
And cause our hearts to burn with love.

Forgotten be each worldly theme,
When christians see each other thus;
We only wish to speak of him,
Who liv'd, and dy'd, and reigns for us.

We'll talk of all he did and said,
And suffer'd for us here below;
The path he mark'd for us to tread,
And what he's doing for us now.

Thus as the moments pass away,
We'll love, and wonder, and adore:
And hasten on that glorious day,
When we shall meet to part no more."

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

But have you not, my brethren, reason to be jealous, lest you corrupt one another from the simplicity that is in Christ, and deaden, rather than enliven, spirituality? How often is Christ either partially or entirely forgotten when you meet? The failures or successes of the neighbour; commercial loss or gain; political intelligence; and a thousand minor subjects too often occupy the attention and the hour that ought to be devoted to the holiest of purposes. The world is the principal figure in the scene, and Christ the dull shading of the whole. His name, his righteousness, his promises, and his glory are introduced, as topics of conversation, but sparingly, if at all; and if conscience will not allow the evening to close without prayer, the chapter is read, the knee is bent, the petition is preferred with lukewarmness, as if the Lord's service were a weariness, and the form of godliness an acceptable substitute for its power. How many persons, whose professed attachment to the doctrines

of grace is sufficiently influential to induce a dissatisfaction with the sermon in which Christ is not the Alpha and Omega, would retire with equal dissatisfaction from that social circle from which all were excluded who could not give a reason of the hope that was in them, and who were not determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified! It is, indeed, natural to talk of the cares and revolutions of this world; and, to a certain extent, commercial intercourse is necessary and cannot be avoided, for even the redeemed occupy important positions in the great scale of national existence. Yet is it not reasonable to expect that, when they meet, their conversation will be as becometh the gospel of Christ, that they will speak to the Lord's glory, and to their mutual edification of the things they have handled, and tasted, and felt of the word of life, and thus provoke one another to love and to good works, "teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord?" Seasons of christian communion are seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; they vest the affections of the heart with more than ordinary sensibility, and are means of grace to

the doubtful and downcast. Doubtless, the ministry of the gospel is one of the glories of the church, and the standing ordinance for the conversion and edification of sinners; yet God is frequently a sanctuary to his people when they unite to rehearse his righteous acts, and to offer on the domestic altar their spiritual sacrifices. The Sun of Righteousness shines in the parlour as well as in the sanctuary; the waters of salvation flow as freely through the hallowed precincts of a good man's house, as through the temple. God is not confined in his operations, nor limited to a few mediums of communication; he blesses his people whenever they meet for prayer and praise.

Oh! then, when will you be wise! when will you think, and speak, and act in character! The idle talk of professors, and the trifling loquacity of some church members is fraught with incalculable mischief: they occupy the chair of judgment when they ought to appear at the bar of a christian ordeal; they take the seat of the scorner, if not the bench of the legislator, and, without evidence, risk the most unjust of verdicts on the character and conduct even of their superiors in knowledge and in faith. To such

persons, nor are their numbers few, how touching is our Lord's reproof! "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite: first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

The temptations awaiting you in the parlour, as well as at the exchange, are many, and refined, and by their speciousness Satan carries on his work to an alarming extent. His object is to give, if possible, an unholy turn to conversation, and thus to prevent that sweet communion of saints which imparts to life some of its pleasing and most endearing peculiarities. He cares not how the time is occupied, nor by what means thought is amused, so that fellowship with Christ is interrupted. Much prayer and watchfulness are, therefore, necessary to render human intercourse profitable. When christian friends anticipate the hallowed luxuries of a social hour, they should fervently beseech the great Head of the church to spiritualize their affections, that

they might, out of the abundance of their enjoyments, be able to "breathe their thoughts in words that burn," and edify one another in love. Prayer should mark their meeting as well as their separation; for unless God condescend to bless them, the occupations and occurrences of this life will exclude all practical thought on the law, on faith, and on judgment to come. Satan aims to engross the first five minutes of the evening, and if he succeed, he will, in all probability, command the hour. It is well to begin the *day* with God, and as one of the fathers observes, "to wash the soul before the body;" and it is as desirable to commence that evening with God which is set apart for friendly intercourse. How can God's blessing be expected unless it be sought? and if sought, it will be found, "for if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

My brethren, are you not conscious of having yielded to the tempter in many instances? Has not evening after evening been spent with your brethren in the faith, when more has been said of the man, than of the Master? when the world so completely engaged your attention that re-

deeming love was forgotten? Soul distress is sometimes attributable to the unsanctified influence of friendship; and may not the unfruitfulness and languor of which you often complain, be traced to some recent or distant interview with a friend? Did you direct him to the cross, did he point you to Jesus when, amid the common salutations of life, vividness marked your feeling, and pleasure moved your tongue? Did you not meet and part without inviting each other to contemplate the beauty and glory of the Saviour? Did you not forget that he was your life, your light, and your all? Perhaps *your* conversation was trifling, and instead of coming to the great question, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" did you not, by your conduct, say, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved; and who is the Lord that I should obey him?" Then, watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Yea, let the husband and the wife be jealous of each other lest they love the creature more than the Creator, and become hindrances, rather than helps, in the ways of the Lord. Let the parent be jealous of the child, lest it become an idol. Let the members of christian churches be jealous of their pastors,

and let them be jealous of their flocks, lest the glory that is due to the Lord be given to his servants, lest pastoral visits lose that spirituality which is essential to the edification of both the visitor and the visited ; and death remove, from a sphere of usefulness, the man that steals the heart for which the Saviour pleads. Let those whose mutual attachment is strong as the ties of life, and who habitually interchange the social visit, be jealous, lest, from false delicacy, they connive at each other's infirmities, and heal when they ought to wound.

"Our dearest joys and nearest friends,
The partners of our blood ;
How they divide our wavering minds,
And leave but half for God.

The fondness of a creature's love,
How strong it strikes the sense ;
Thither the warm affections move,
Nor can we call them thence."

"Nothing will console or enrich us in the neglect of intimate fellowship with Christ. We must walk with God at any rate, or our souls will die. Even christian communion will form a most empty substitute for this hallowed intercourse. The command is, "enter thy closet, and shut thy door"—shut out, not only vanity and

the world, but, even for a time, the communion of saints. The soul may lose its spiritual vigour in any company but that of God, in the best as well as in the worst; in the church as well as in the world." Every movement and association that clashes with fellowship with God, must be relinquished; for as there is in his presence a fulness of joy, and in his absence a darkness that may be felt, his visits more than compensate for the loss of social bliss, and the light of his countenance is more calculated to elevate, than are the frowns of the world to depress. Unless decision of character give uniformity to habit, and the Lord's favour be esteemed above the bosom companion, we shall often be with the social party when we ought to be at the family altar; and as often be with our families when we ought to be in our closets. Sweet as may be the identities of friendship, and painful as may be a separation from those we love, they must not absorb that time and attention in public which are due to God and to the soul in private. To receive the Lord's blessing we must be where that blessing is to be found; and however singularly conducive to soul prosperity is fellowship with the Lord's people, we must remember that vain

is the help of man, and that without a close walk with God religion in the soul must decline. When social meetings are protracted to a late hour, family worship, or private prayer, or perhaps both, are neglected, or hurried through in confusion; for if the excitements of the day have been excessive, the tenth or the eleventh hour of the evening pleads for the weariness of the flesh, and solicits the invigorating influence of sleep; and, too frequently, the knee bends at the altar with reluctance, while the odour of the evening's sacrifice ascends but faintly to the Guardian of the midnight hour.

Prudent arrangements will assist your management of time; and firmness, marked by discretion and humility, will enable you to give to every hour the attention for which your responsibility calls, and to the duties of life that portion of the day which they legally claim. The inviting engagements of sociality, hallowed as they may be by deep devotion, must be regulated, lest they prevent or disturb the felicities of the lonely hour. If our friends take us from the Lord, or keep us from the Lord, or disturb our communion with the Lord, *they* are culpable for breaking in upon our retirements, and *we* merit reproof

for allowing them to interfere with our sacred exercises. We are told of a person who, when his official duties detained him from the family or closet at the hour devoted to their high consecrations, would leave the tumult of business and retire for a few moments for prayer, lest at a later hour, or by physical exhaustion, he should be tempted to neglect, or to hurry through the exercises which he knew to be essential to the prosperity of his soul. And it is said of Colonel Gardiner, that he always had two hours with God in a morning. If his regiment marched at four, he would be up at two.

> "O lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
> Lost to the noble sallies of the soul,
> Who think it solitude to be alone."

How true is the adage—the christian is never less alone than when alone. Retirement is a relief of which he should, as often as possible, avail himself. The lamp will burn more steadily when sheltered, than in storm; and the fruit that evades the touch will preserve its bloom.

> "In secret silence of the mind,
> My heaven and there my God I find."

Assistance is doubtless useful: and it is the

duty of the strong christian to lend his arm to the weak; but he is obliged to take the quiet walk in the vineyard, and to lave his thirst at a stream, specially his own, because directing its course through a medium which he only can follow. Communion of saints is sometimes an interruption; and though Peter may come down from the mount of glory, his visit to John is not always seasonable: if the latter be leaning on the bosom of his beloved, and wrapt in the vision of his charms; he needs not the touch of the former, though his hands might drop with myrrh, and his fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh. Who can lack society with Jesus? and when the soul is indulged with his presence and blessing, that problem is easily solved, "alone, yet not alone." Christ is all in all. Is not the friend, then, as well as the foe, to be dreaded? Who would not watch and pray against the plunderers of his peace and comfort? If the master of a house knew what hour the thief would come, he would watch and guard his property: and shall not we be careful of our spiritual riches? Our salvation cannot be lost, our joys may; and the whisper of mercy may be hushed even by a trifling incident. Friends rush in, "where strangers fear to

tread," and, without thought, obtrude on the heart the deadly snares of refined temptation. The friend, then, is to be suspected; for how can that intercourse be profitable in either immediate or remote results, that is not sanctified by the Holy Ghost! And if the social circle be left with a mind more earthly and dissipated than that which entered it, where is the evidence of the communion having been sanctified? For some years before the death of the great Mr. Hervey, he visited but very few of the principal persons in his neighbourhood. Being once asked, why he so seldom went to see the neighbouring gentlemen, who yet shewed him all possible esteem and respect? he answered, "I can hardly name a polite family, where the conversation ever turns upon the things of God. I hear much frothy and worldly chit-chat, but not a word of Christ; and I am determined not to visit those companies where there is not room for my Master as well as for myself." Oh that the Lord's people would follow the example of this holy man! then would they prove that,

> "Friendship's the wine of life, that
> Smitten friends are angels, sent
> On errands full of love."

My brother, "know'st thou what a friend contains?" A *christian* "friend is worth all hazards we can run!" Ye masters and heads of families; ye members of the household circle, where the christian altar is its centre; ye visitors to the drawing room, and to the poor man's tent; ye visited, who bid those welcome to your boards of hospitality, whose connexion with you, either by congregational or relative ties, has entwined their best interests around your hearts; ye members of this church, whether old or young, whether your names have been but recently entered on its records, or whether for the third of a century you have here drank the sacramental cup—while friendship has been your motto, has the cross of Christ been the standard around which you have invariably rallied the associations of public and of private life? Are ye prepared to tell the world, the church to which you belong, and the humble enquirer who now interrogates you, that no pangs of conscience disturb your meditations on christian intercourse? that your reflections on the hours devoted to the friendly visit are remorseless? If not, "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words." And,

First. In your intercourse with each other, seek the Lord's presence. For "sweet indeed, and inestimably precious are the minutest, the most glimmering, and most transient views of interest in the Father's electing grace, and in the unsearchable merits of Christ. For the Holy Spirit to visit us with the light of his countenance, and to bless us with the knowledge of salvation, by bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, is at once the certain earnest, and richest foretaste of that consummate bliss prepared for the vessels of mercy before the foundation of the world. The ordinances of the gospel are a kind of half-way house where God meets and communes with his children on the road to heaven. These are the windows and the lattices through which the King of saints displays part of his beauty and glory to the eye of faith. Communion with God leaves a calm and a sweetness upon the soul, which are remembered after many days, as a vase of rich perfume, or of odoriferous unguent, scents the air with fragrance even after the vessel that contained it is stopped up, and put by."*

Secondly. When the Saviour favours you with

* Toplady.

the visits of his grace, endeavour to detain him. Jacob detained him, when, by the prayer and effort of faith, he obtained the blessing he implored—"I will not let thee go except thou bless me." The church detained him: "she held him in the galleries, and said, it was but a little I passed from them, and I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him, I would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." The women at the sepulchre detained him. "As they went to tell his disciples, Jesus met them, saying, all hail; and they came and held him by the fee and worshipped him." The disciples on their journey to Emmaus detained him. "And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent, and he went in to tarry with them." Aim ye, who know his worth, to detain him, "for happy is the man that findeth wisdom; she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her," and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Thirdly. Be jealous of every thing that would disturb or grieve him. "Let those who have

comfort be afraid of sinning it away."* How careful was the church of her enjoyments, and how affecting are her words: "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please." As if she had said, Christ is the altogether lovely, and the chief among ten thousand. He is my beloved and my friend; he has won my affections, and with him I am happy. At home and abroad, in the church and in the world, he is to me more precious than rubies. What are friends, health, and property to him! He is the pearl of great price, and more to me than all that the world can give. Amid the sorsows of life, his consolations cheer me; and in the prospect of death, he prevents my fear. Matters are now brought to a pleasing issue. He is mine,

* Matthew Henry.

and I am his. He has made me willing to be governed exclusively by his word and Spirit; I lie down in his pasture, drink the waters of life, and am refreshed. Oh! the bliss of communion with Jesus! it is unspeakable and full of glory!

"I cannot live contented here,
Without some glimpses of his face;
And heaven, without his presence there,
Would be a dark and tiresome place."

I therefore dread a separation, for I dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar. When I would do good, evil is present with me; the world, the flesh, and the devil, unite to oppose me in my spiritual career, and concur to tempt me to leave the best of friends. Oh! thou great and condescending Saviour, keep me near thyself.

"A moment's intercourse with thee,
Is worth a year's delay."

"When earthly cares engross the day,
And hold my thoughts aside from thee;
The shining hours of cheerful light,
Are long and tedious years to me.
And if no evening visit's paid,
Between my Saviour and my soul;
How dull the night, how sad the shade,
How mournfully the minutes roll."

Therefore, would I be jealous of his presence, and charge all about me, by every thing that is dear and lovely, not to disturb nor wake him till he please. I adjure you, ye daughters of Jerusalem, not to displease my heavenly Friend. My affections, my judgment, my will, my enemy, my friend, my wife, my husband, my child, my father, my mother, my brother, my sister, I charge you all that ye disturb not the Lord Jesus! My afflictions, my mercies, my temptations, my privileges, my duties, my enjoyments, my business, my losses, my gains, my disappointments, I charge you all that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please! What shall I do without him when Satan tempts; when flesh and heart fail; when death's terrific blast chills the vital current in the vein; "when the silver chord of life loosens apace; when the last pins of the earthly tabernacle are taken out; when the limbs quiver; when the pulse forgets to beat?" then, ah! then, what shall I do without him who has conquered death and the grave! I cannot spare him: no, without him how black the banner that waves o'er Jordan's flood! how terrible the grave! But if he be with me in the manifestations of his grace, I shall be happy, my soul will sing herself

to rest, and amid the crash of material dissolution, there will be

"A gentle wafting to eternal life."

I charge you then, O ye believers in the Lord Jesus, and especially the members of this church, to embrace every opportunity for spiritual intercourse. Christian friendship is *sweet indeed.* Faithful to her professions, and assiduously anxious to wipe the tear from the care-worn cheek, she does not shrink from her duty because its claims are heavy; but sacrificing whatever is dear to her, to relieve the objects of her tender solicitude, she *labours* to impart "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." She has access to the promises of grace, to the covenant of mercy, and enriches herself that she may enrich. She is skilful in her administrations, sincere in her counsels, wise in her arrangements, and sympathetic in her appeals. She goes from the throne laden with blessings, and invites the poor to the feast. To the trembling penitent she "unfolds the page that shews how sin can be forgiven;" bids the fainting lean on the Saviour's everlasting arm; and never chants more sweetly than when she whispers,

"Mourning souls, dry up your tears,
Banish all your guilty fears;
See your guilt and curse remove,
Cancell'd by redeeming love."

Finally, my brethren, maintain the dignity of your character and the sanctity of your professions. Invite one another to hear, and be not ashamed to tell, what the Lord has done for your souls. Waste not the hour professedly consecrated to the communion of saints, in worldly chit-chat, but let the commanding subject of a Saviour slain and a Saviour glorified absorb your attention. Are ye friends of the heavenly Bridegroom? shew yourselves friendly. Become the helpers of each other's joy, but not the plunderers of each other's peace. Meet for prayer. The cause of Christ prospers by prayer. Let meetings for christian communion be held in your houses when domestic and commercial circumstances will allow of these arrangements: let love be your motto, and holiness your law, and decision your watchword, and spirituality your ambition, and the glory of God and communion with him, the end of all your pursuits, and I expect speedily to see your "righteousness going forth as brightness, and your salvation as a lamp that burneth."

"Arise, shine, thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."—We live in a dark and sinful world, where but a few scattered rays relieve the gloomy scene around us; and where the followers of the Lamb, though enlightened from above, are so obscured, that they can scarcely be distinguished from those who sit in darkness, and in the valley and shadow of death. Their lamps are but floating specks in the atmosphere, only now and then visible: and even when seen, the glimmering disappoints the hope it raises—it is not sufficiently distinct and steady to convince the unbeliever that it was kindled at the altar of inspiration. Shall we not, then, be concerned to *live* in the Spirit? that we may *walk* in the Spirit? O! let us be anxious to hold fellowship with Christ in *all* places, that we may in *every* place, and among *all* people, shine in light borrowed from the Sun of Righteousness. We have too long slumbered in the shades: and but for some peculiarities of habit which distinguish the nominal christian from the openly profane, what has there been, in our profession of the truth, to awaken irresistible conviction in the mind of the

sceptic, that we have been with Jesus? Could the sanctuary, the closet, the parlour, the social circle, the place of business, disclose their observances of our indifference to spiritual exercises, and our abuse of mercies, and our neglect of privileges, and our waste of time, surely at such a disclosure, as this would be, had angels tears to shed, they would weep at our criminal negligence in the ways of wisdom! Indeed—*indeed*, we have been satisfied with the shell of christianity—Oh, when shall we possess the kernel! We have measured ourselves by ourselves; and, not daring to be singular, have followed man's example instead of Christ's. The member has been contented with the pastor's degree of spirituality and devotedness; and if the child and the servant have copied the parent and the master, they have concluded all is well: when even, perhaps, each has declined in the life and power of godliness.

Our views of experimental and practical religion are too complex: we are too nice on some points, too lax on others: we lavish attention on trifles, and disregard weighty matters. So alive are we to the influence of those peculiar views of the gospel, which education may have given us,

and so extremely prone to judge of things divine by the opinions of those to whom we have taught to yield obedience, that no ordinary effort of faith is required, calmly, and without prejudice, to examine the truth, and to investigate our own motives and conduct: we think too *much* of what we are in *man's* eye, too *little* of what we must be in *God's*.

Let us then, my brethren, be sober, and gird up the loins of our minds; and be specially careful and solicitous to promote *their* spirituality with whom we associate. "Let us provoke one another to love and good works, and so much the more, as we see the day approaching." Here we have no continuing city—the fact of our dissolution is revealed that we might be prayerful; the time is concealed that we might be watchful. And if death terminates not our earthly existence within the limits of a few fleeting weeks, a thousand circumstances may occur to lessen our means and opportunities of usefulness. "Work, therefore, while it is called to-day: for the night cometh in which no man can work."

"If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them."

Trusting that the Lord will condescend to bless

what I have written to your edification, and that he will, by the help these pages may afford, render you fruitful in every good word and work,

Believe me,

Your faithful friend,

E. MANNERING.

THE END.

E. JUSTINS & SON, Printers, 41, Brick Lane.

ERRATA.

Page 69, line 7, for *witers*, read *writers*.
74, 25, for *punishments*, read *punishment*.
77, 5, for *shadow*, read *shadows*.
80, 22, for *pourtrayed*, read *portrayed*.
100, 7, for *executions*, read *execution*.
— 25, for *disturbs*, read *disturb*.
103, 2, for *pourtrays*, read *portrays*.
111, 20, for *dy'd*, read *died*.
134, add, *been*, to the end of the second line.
— 18, for *terminates*, read *terminate*.

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